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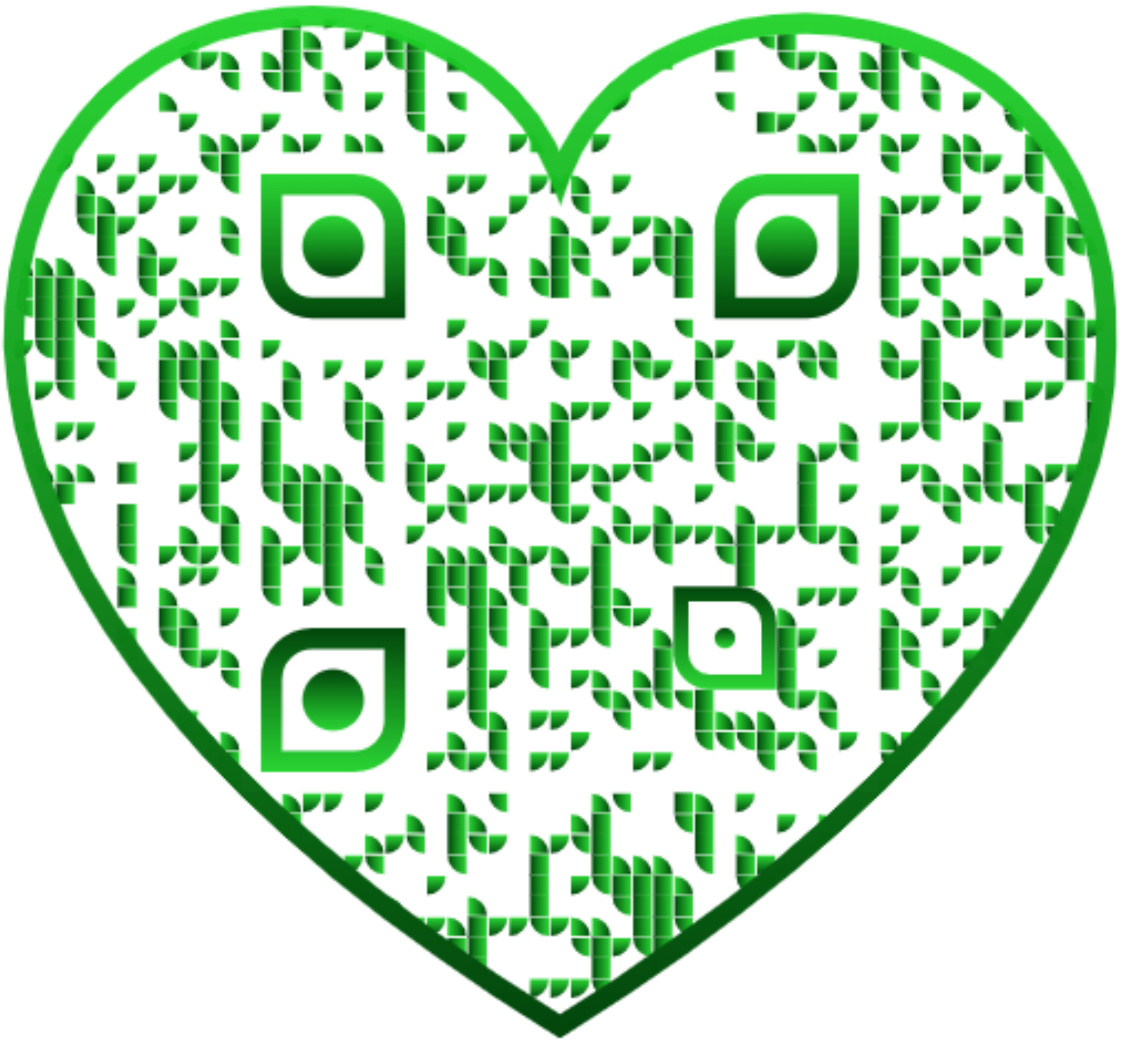

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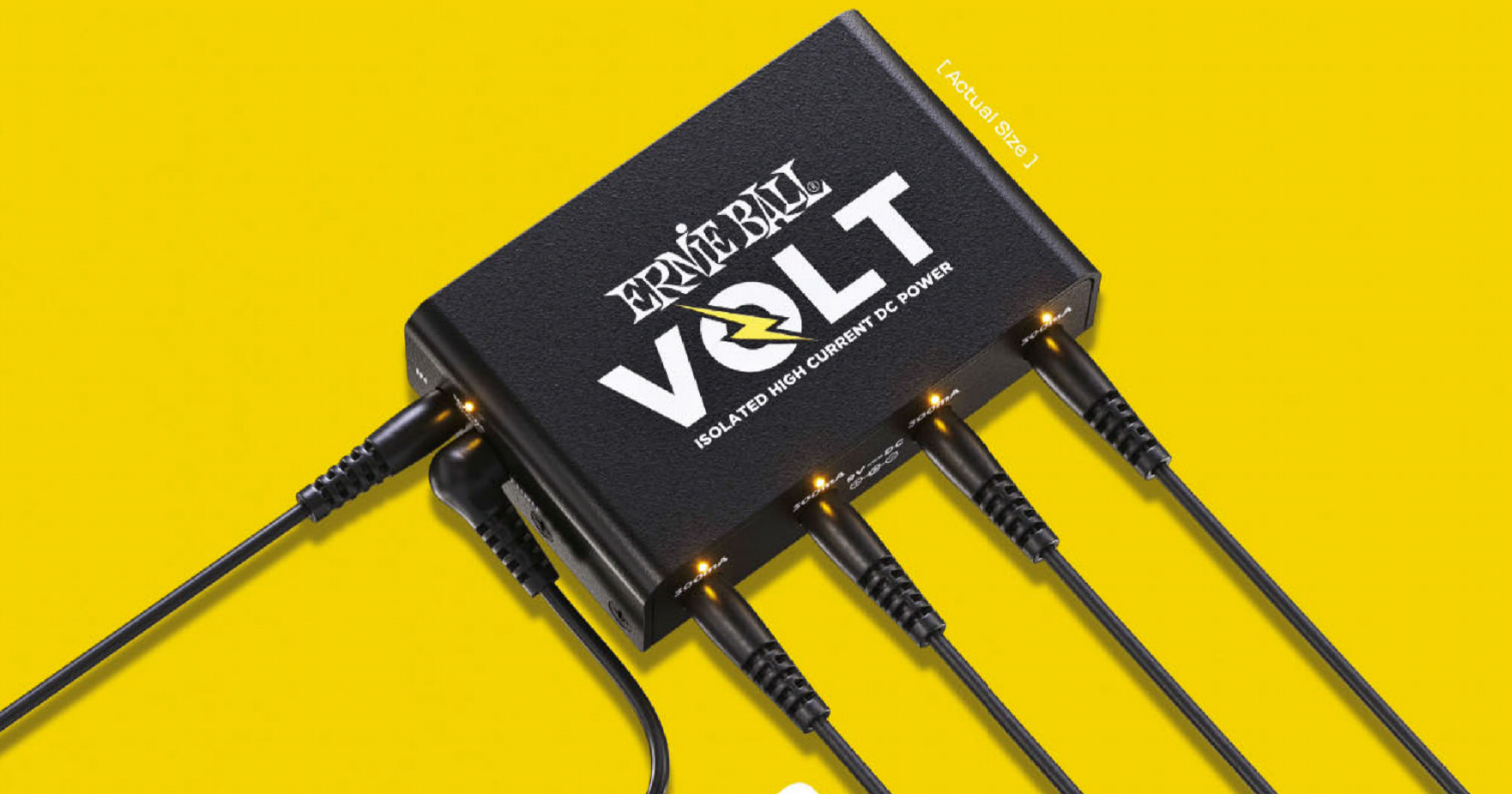

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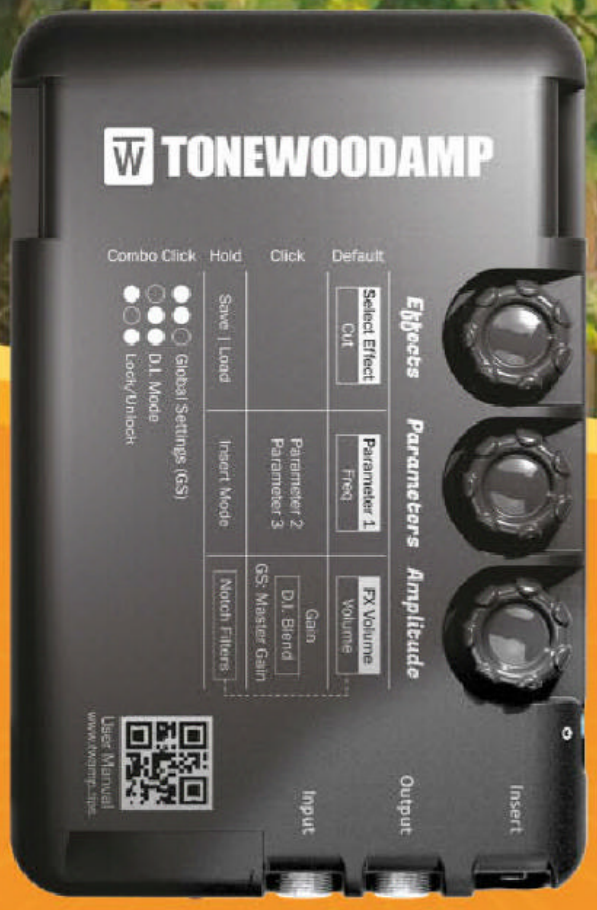

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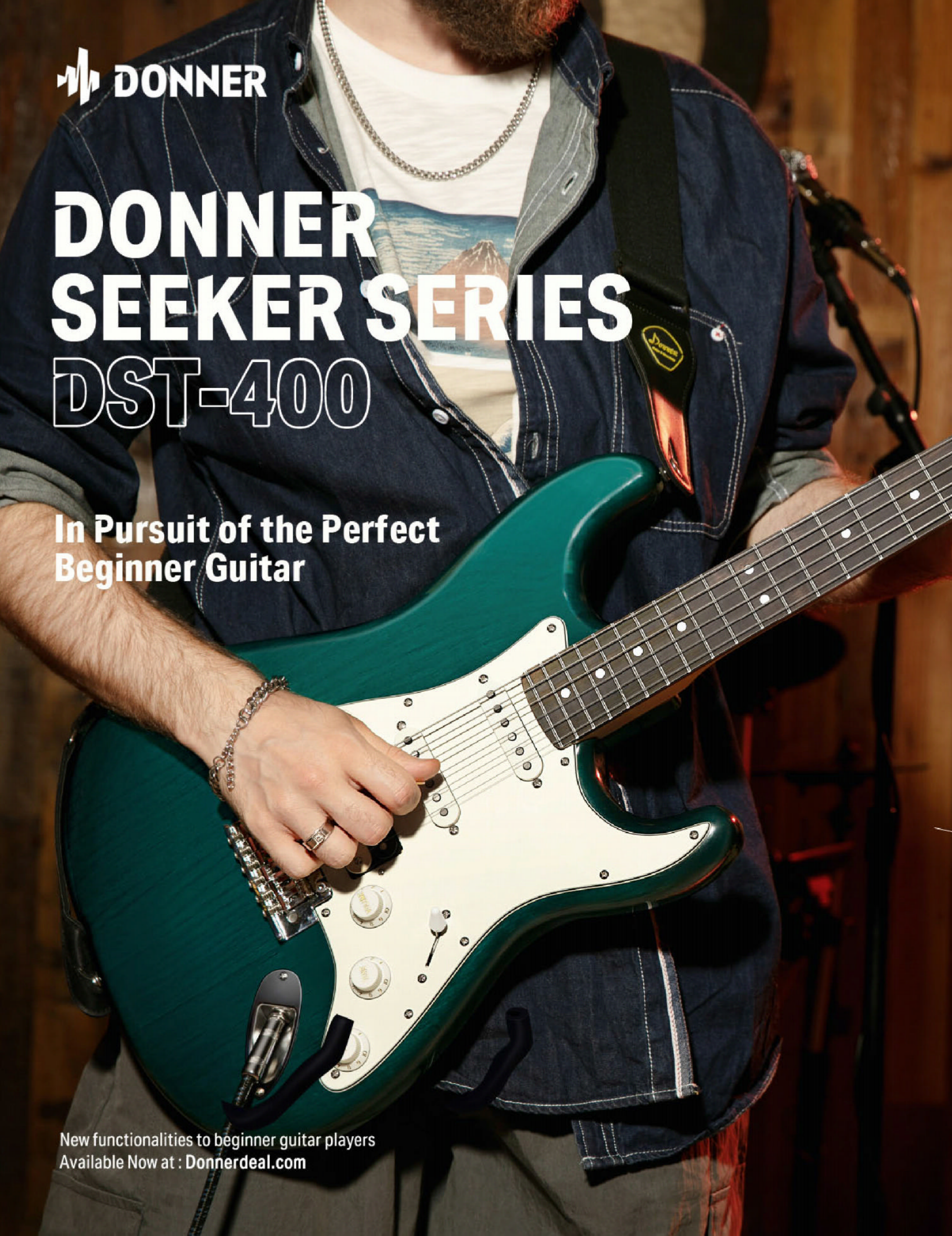

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CONTENTS

VOL. 43 | NO. 5 | MAY 2022

FEATURING

32 30 YEARS OF EASTMAN GUITARS

Eastman celebrates 30 years of bringing true handcrafted stringed instruments to the masses

38 30 INSTRUMENTAL MASTERMINDS!

Abundant proof that guitar-based music *soooo* doesn't need vocals or lyrics to grab listeners' attention

46 ANIMALS AS LEADERS

Tosin Abasi and **Javier Reyes** discuss **Animals As Leaders'** heavy (and highly anticpated) new album

54 JOE SATRIANI

The supreme shredder challenged himself to create a "new standard" for instrumental guitar albums

62 JOHN McLAUGHLIN

The jazz/fusion great tells us about his run-in with the law

66 THE CREATION'S EDDIE PHILLIPS

An ode to **the Creation's** inventive, bow-wielding guitarist

Joe Satriani photographed in San Francisco in late January

54

TRANSCRIBED

"Don't Dream It's Over"
by Mateus Asato
PAGE 86

"Inside Out"
by XYZ
PAGE 90

"Heaven Beside You"
by Alice In Chains
PAGE 100

DEPARTMENTS

16 SOUNDING BOARD/DEFENDERS

19 TUNE-UPS

We give **Squeeze's Glenn Tilbrook** and **Chris Difford** the Dear Guitar Hero treatment (our first DGH feature in a while!). We also catch up with **Volbeat's Michael Poulsen** and **Rob Caggiano,** plus **Khemmis, the Flower Kings**, **Billy Strings, Haunted Shores** and **My Morning Jacket's Jim James** (and his new signature Gibson ES-335)

72 MEET THE NEW LINE 6 DL4 MKII

Line 6's classic delay pedal lives on!

75 SOUNDCHECK

75. Blackstar Dept. 10 pedals — Dual Drive, Dual Distortion and Boost
77. Martin SC-10E
78. Emerald Virtuo
79. Fender Acoustic Junior GO
80. New EQ

81 COLUMNS

81. In Deep
by Andy Aledort
82. Tales from Nerdville
by Joe Bonamassa
83. Melodic Muse
by Andy Timmons
84. Blues Truth
by Kirk Fletcher

110 TONAL RECALL

The secrets behind **Jeff Beck's** tone on "Freeway Jam" from *Blow by Blow*

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WOODSHED

VOL. 43 | NO. 5 | MAY 2022

LINK WRAY HAD THE RIGHT IDEA

AS I WRITE this Woodshed, Metallica's Kirk Hammett has just announced his first-ever solo release, a four-song instrumental EP called *Portals*. Steve Vai's *Inviolate* is out and about, and new instrumental albums by Joe Satriani, Animals As Leaders and John McLaughlin are covered in this very issue. Now, let us pause to consider the thousands upon thousands of other — lesser-known — guitarists in the universe who ply their instrumental wares daily on YouTube, Instagram, on stages, in studios, in their Seventies-era-paneling-enrobed basements, bedrooms or living rooms, etc. And let us think about the background music you hear in countless movies and TV series. Instrumental guitar music is everywhere. Seriously, when I consider the amoeba-like concept of "guitar in 2022," literally the first thing I think of is somewhat complex instrumental rock. Why, even *I* was the guitarist and main songwriter in an instrumental trio from 1998 to 2014!

And, ya know, it's not too difficult to understand why so many guitarists are drawn to the idea of recording instrumental music. You don't need to sing like a young Robert Plant — hell, you could even sing like an old Lee Marvin (Did you ever hear Lee Marvin sing "Wand'rin' Star" in *Paint Your Wagon*? Yikes!). All you need is a guitar, an idea and some cheap recording equipment. Anyway, this issue is dedicated to that music in its many forms. We stuck with that theme with our transcription of Mateus Asato's take on Crowded House's "Don't Dream It's Over" and our Tonal Recall dedicated to Jeff Beck's "Freeway Jam." By the way, this issue's Tonal Recall also happens to be the final installment — but fear not! The great Chris Gill will continue to take our back page (well, page 110) to new gear- and artist-centric heights starting with the next issue. Enjoy all of it!

DAMIAN FANELLI
Editor-in-Chief

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OF THE MONTH

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Also, please let us know if you'd like us to share it on Instagram!

SLASH BY PATRICK GILBERT

KEITH RICHARDS BY FRANK L. PETTIBONE

DEFENDERS *of the Faith*

Tito Rodriguez

AGE: 46
LOCATION: Queens, NY
GUITARS: Blue Rocker Custom, Ibanez Prestige RG, Peavey Wolfgang, Gibson Les Paul Studio
SONG I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Whitesnake "Judgement Day," Steve Vai "For the Love of God," Spyro Gyra "Old San Juan," Journey "Wheel in the Sky"
GEAR I WANT MOST: Blackstar Silverline head, Peavey Invective head, Ibanez High Performance RG

Eric Bauer

AGE: 22
LOCATION: Niagara Falls, ON, Canada
GUITARS: Gibson Slash Signature Les Paul, Gibson '50s Tribute Les Paul Goldtop, Gibson Explorer Standard, Epiphone Les Paul Standard, Wylde Audio Odin, Palermo Guitars Mick Mars Replica Strat, Jackson Pro Series Soloist, Schecter Damien Platinum 6-FR, Schecter Blackjack ATX S-II, B.C. Rich Mockingbird
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Guns N' Roses "Mr. Brownstone," Deep Purple "Burn," Rammstein "Mein Herz Brennt" and originals by my band, Stone Blind
GEAR I WANT MOST: ESP E-II RZK-I

Jeff Rich

AGE: 60
LOCATION: Marion, IL
GUITARS: Fender: American and MIM Strats, Pawn Shop P51, Jazz. Gibson: Les Paul, Custom Shop 665, Custom Shop J45 Koa Maui Wowie from last Hawaiian wood. Takamine: Glenn Frey Signature, Black NEX, DBZ-DBZ/Diamond Maverick
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Tom Petty "Free Falling," Don Henley "Heart of the Matter" and originals with co-writer Stevie Lee Penley
GEAR I WANT MOST: Axe FX III

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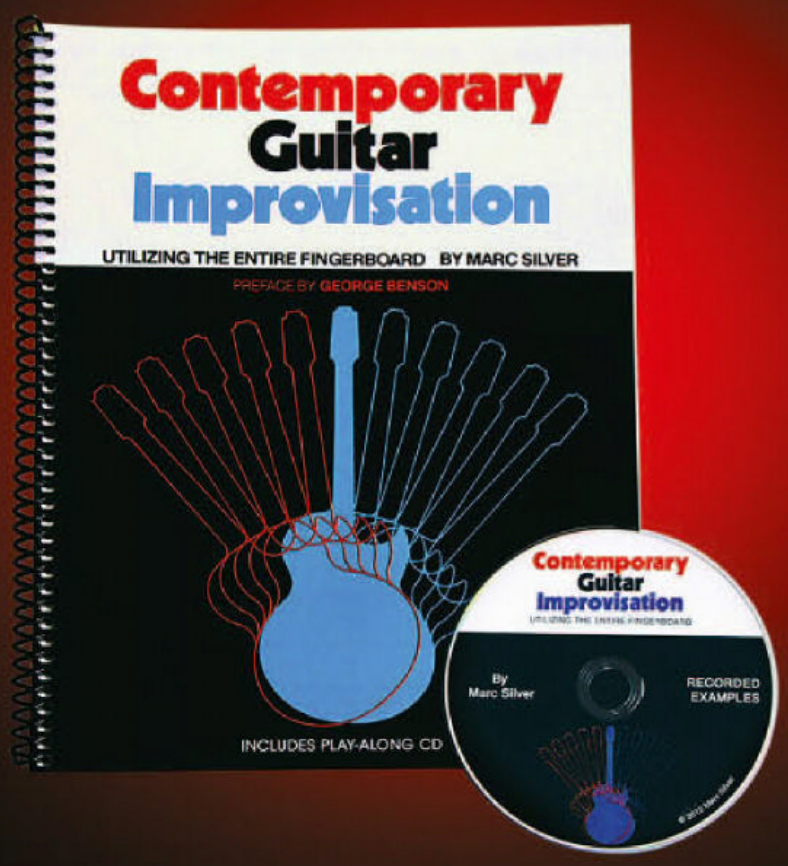

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THE FLOWER KINGS 27

28 VOLBEAT

HAUNTED SHORES 30

My Morning Jacket's Jim James with his new signature Gibson ES-335. "They are very versatile — more than people think," he says

GIBSON

Tones to Love, Love, Love

MY MORNING JACKET FRONTMAN/GUITARIST JIM JAMES ON DIALING IN SOME OF THE NASTIEST FUZZ TONES OF HIS CAREER — AND WHAT TO EXPECT FROM HIS NEW SIGNATURE GIBSON ES-335

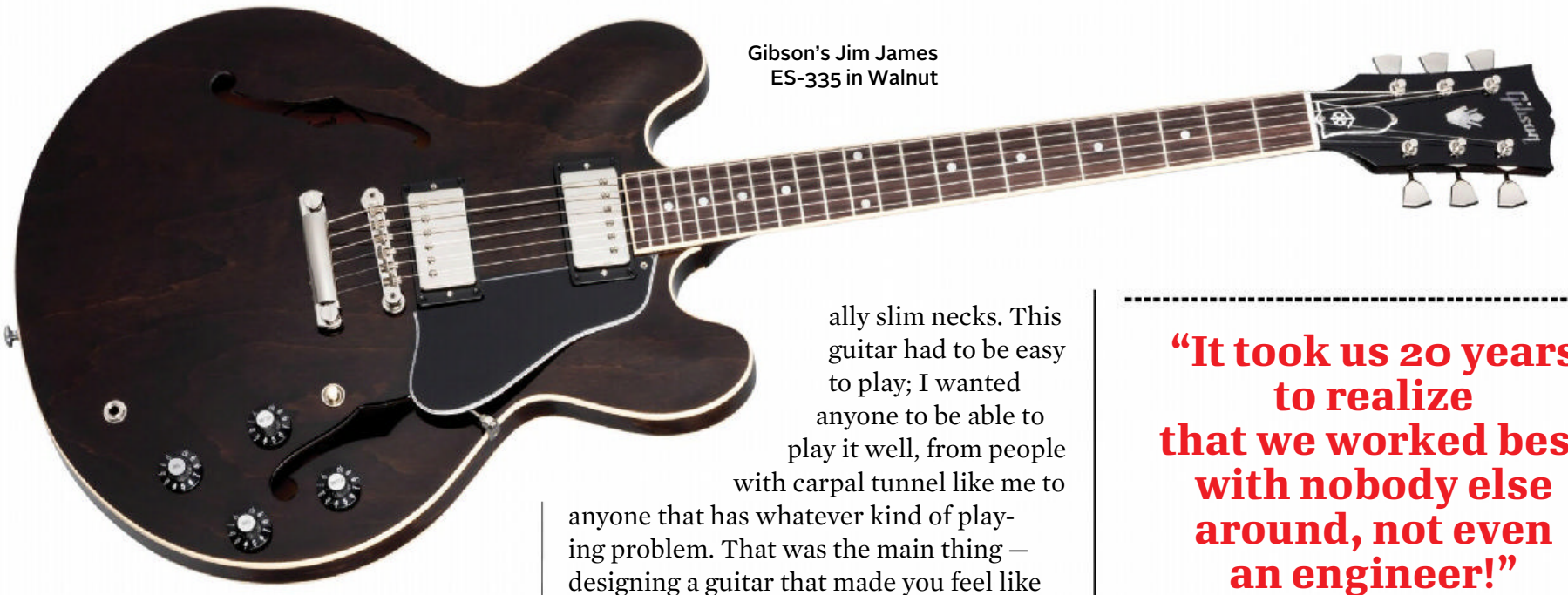
By Amit Sharma

KENTUCKY ROCKERS MY Morning Jacket are certainly well-versed in the art of vintage guitar tones. Fusing elements of country and psychedelic alongside their Southern rock roots, there's always been a glaringly human quality to their noises — an unabashed celebration of all things raw and lo-fi. For their new self-titled album, singer/guitarist Jim James and his bandmates took that concept even further, dialing in fuzz tones that cough and spit harder than ever.

But besides the new music, there's a signature Gibson ES-335 on the way — which the frontman describes as an instrument for players who put ease and comfort high up in their list of requirements and cites as being far more versatile than it might initially appear. Below, we get the full story behind the new model — and the new recordings.

How and when did these songs start arriving to you?

It's hard to remember exactly. Over the last couple of years, things have just come to me at certain points, and when they do I really try to take my time with them. I don't know where exactly these ideas come from, but I always make sure I learn what they mean and literally figure out what they are in terms of chords and arrangements. When we went in to make this record, we just wanted to play together again. I didn't have a set plan or anything; we



Gibson's Jim James ES-335 in Walnut

were trying to carve out different ideas. It came out pretty interesting; sometimes I'd have a fully formed song that I was super excited about... other times I'd have a little part that would end up turning into one of our favorite songs collectively. It's always interesting to see how that process is going to go. You never quite know!

There are some mouth-watering tones all over this record. What are we hearing in terms of gear?

I only really used two guitars on this record — my Gibson ES-335 and this really cool homemade guitar a friend made for me. He basically just bought a bunch of plywood from Home Depot and we threw a Fender neck on it. I guess it's basically a Telecaster. And it literally has nothing in it and weighs around 2 lbs. because it's a hollowbody made of super-cheap wood. It has a humbucker in it by the bridge — and that thing just rips... it's absolutely crazy. Along with the jack input, that's all there is to that guitar — it doesn't have any volume or tone knobs! And that's all I used for guitars. We made the record at this place called 64Sound; they had some amps there, but the whole time I was using a Fender Bassman head and some old shitty 2x12 cabinet that didn't even have a name on it. I went into the sessions thinking I didn't want to bring in mountains of gear and be super precious about the tones. I wanted to use whatever they had there. So I plugged into that Fender head and started blowing that thing up! [*Laughs*]

Congratulations on your new signature Gibson ES-335, by the way! What did you do to make it yours?

I'm so excited by it. I told Gibson I wanted this to be a really simple, classic guitar that looks as beautiful as it sounds. I've got carpal tunnel syndrome so I like really slim necks. This guitar had to be easy to play; I wanted anyone to be able to play it well, from people with carpal tunnel like me to anyone that has whatever kind of playing problem. That was the main thing — designing a guitar that made you feel like you'd owned it for 100 years every time you picked it up, almost like it had always been a part of you. I wanted it to have a connection to nature, so I kept it as a really simple dark wood finish. You can do so many things with an ES-335; they are very versatile — more than people think.

"Lucky to Be Alive" feels incredibly gritty and fuzzy, to the point where your guitar almost sounds like it's fighting for its life. How'd you achieve that?

The main pedal I used was one by Devi Ever FX. They're made in Portland, Oregon, and I don't really know much about them. They're very strange when you check them out on the Internet; their online presence is kinda odd. It looks like they are still making some of the pedals, but it's hard to tell if they're in business or not! They have this one called the Fuzz Bomb, which actually has pictures of falling bombs on it — the kind associated with World War II airplanes. The thing I love about that pedal is that most fuzz units sound really cool in the studio, but when you click them on live, even if you have everything up all the way, certain frequencies go missing and your tone feels more quiet. It doesn't matter how much of that crazy fuzz you dial [*in*] — you end up losing some of your sound...

"Complex" has some really interesting single-note riffs and a serious amount of crackly low-end.

Actually, you just reminded me — sometimes I would put in an octave pedal here and there, and that song has a lower octave on there at points too. I used the Electro-Harmonix POG and the classic brown Boss one [*OC-3*]. There was something really fantastic about the way that Bassman sounded when we were pushing it with more low end, which helped for those single note lines.

"It took us 20 years to realize that we worked best with nobody else around, not even an engineer!"
— JIM JAMES

"Out of Range Pt. 2," on the other hand, is more of a delicate affair with some really beautiful fingerpicked parts. How did that come about?

That ended up being one of the more interesting tracks on the album. I originally wrote it on ukulele, or at least the main idea, and then I translated it onto guitar, eventually showing it to [*co-guitarist*] Carl Broemel, who ended up playing that part on the album. It's a really difficult riff to play and sing at the time because it goes over and over again with all that picking. I couldn't pick all those notes and sing at the same time. So Carl played it and I ended up doing some larger rhythm things and leads on top.

There's a lot of performance detail on the solos, like the one you played on "Love Love Love," where you can almost hear the whole guitar being shaken for vibrato.

That song reminds me of everything we came in to achieve with this record. We wanted to have fun in the studio with no one else there but the five of us. It took us 20 years to realize that we worked best with nobody else around, not even an engineer! It was just about the fun and songs like "Love Love Love" and "Never in the Real World." We just let loose and those songs happened. Sometimes in the studio you can be so focused on getting things right, you don't do things like shaking your guitar with each bend or move around in the way you would live. We wanted this to feel *real*, almost forgetting we were in the studio for a minute and start rocking out so hard to bring out the more emotional and human elements that bands often lose in the studio.

Khemmis

GUITARISTS BEN HUTCHERSON AND PHIL PENDERGAST ACCENTUATE THEIR BLACK METAL/DEATH METAL INFLUENCES ON THIS DENVER TRIO'S MUCH-LAUDED LATEST

By Jon Wiederhorn

OVER THE PAST decade, Denver's Khemmis has climbed to the top tier of the modern doom hierarchy, and they've balefully embraced the tag (their official website is khemmisdoom.com). Over three full-lengths, they've augmented epic songs with bruising riffs and twin-guitar hooks while never straying from their gloom-saturated roots. But with their latest album, *Deceiver*, guitarists Ben Hutcherson and Phil Pendergast have spread their taloned wings even further, injecting more extreme elements into their multifaceted music.

"In the past, there's always been that critic's voice in the back of our heads — imagined or otherwise — that kept us from taking some musical chances," Hutcherson says. "With this [*album*], we tried our best to silence those voices and just go for it."

"Some people have viewed aspects of what we do as power metal, but we're more about black metal and death metal," Pendergast adds. "We wanted to accentuate those influences more directly without ripping apart the DNA that's pretty specific to the band."

In addition to featuring a more eclectic array of styles — "melodeath" passages on "Avernal Gate," droning, downtuned guitar layers in "Living Pyre" — *Deceiver* is filled with Hutcherson's most dazzling leads to date.

"I spent most of the quarantine learning to play guitar properly, the way I should have when I was 16," he says. "I worked on scales and modes and the technical things — angling my pick differently when I sweep — stuff I had just never done before."

Instead of writing together in their practice space, as they've done in the past, Khemmis spent countless hours remotely trading and refining rhythms and arrangements. As they prepared to enter the studio, Pendergast was concerned they were overprepared. He needn't have worried.

Khemmis guitarists Phil Pendergast [*left*] and Ben Hutcherson

"The way we intellectualized the music when we were writing left us relatively little time between the time the songs were done and when we entered the studio," he says. "So they actually sounded spontaneous and alive when we played them, which was the opposite of what I was worrying about."

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** (both) Dunable Asteroid Flying V, Guild D-40
- **AMPS** (both) Orange Rockerverb MK III, Peavey 6505, PRS Sonzera 50
- **EFFECTS** (both) Mr. Black Ambience Echoverb and Shepard's End flanger, Lichtlaerm Audio Amber Spyglass EQ, Kassandra chorus/phaser and Gehenna preamp/distortion/boost

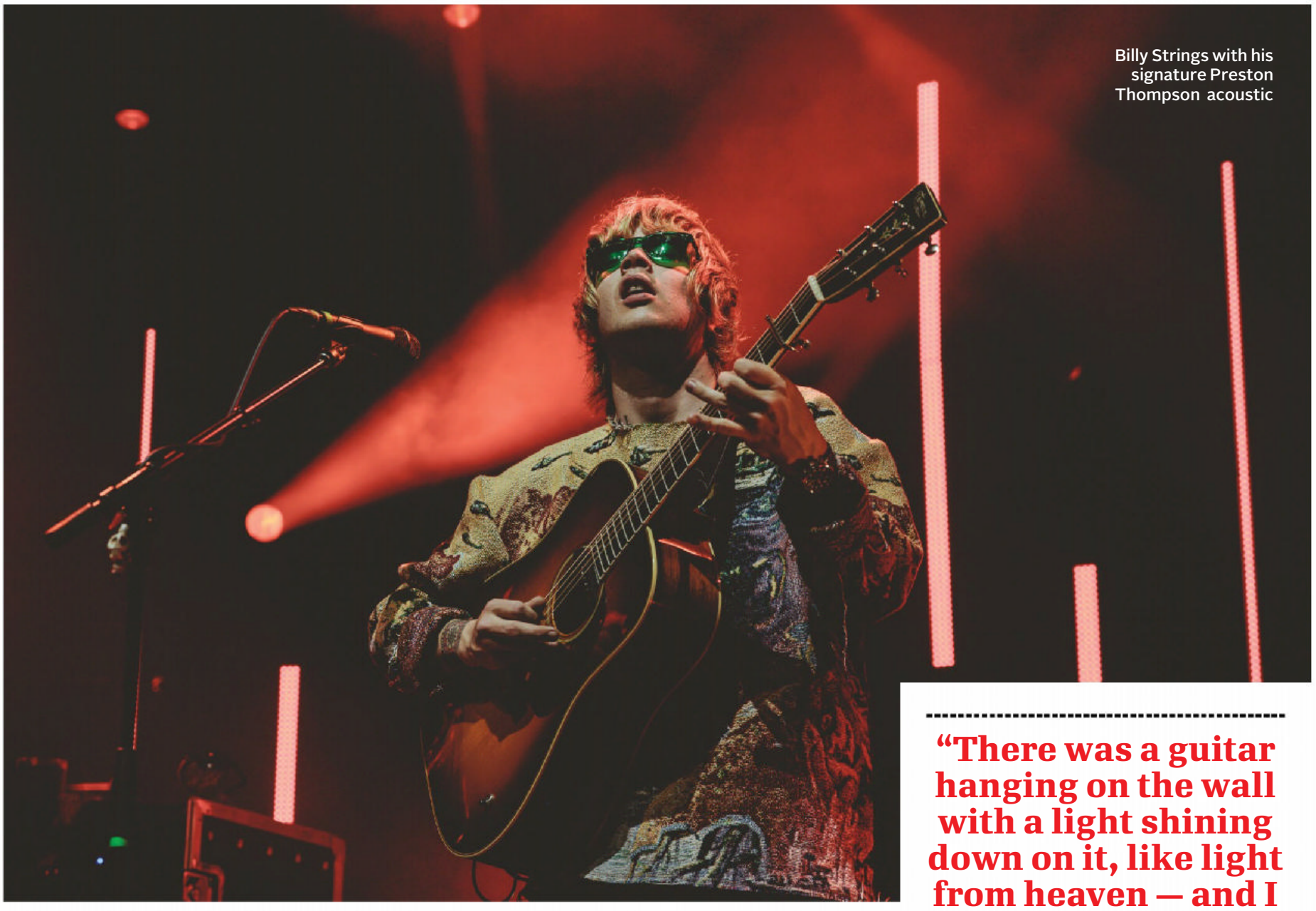
"I spent most of the quarantine learning to play guitar properly, the way I should have when I was 16"

— BEN HUTCHERSON

In addition to honing his lead guitar chops and co-composing all the songs, Hutcherson wrote and played bass, since ex-bassist Dan Beiers left Khemmis in December 2020. David Small will fill in on tour.

"I thought I'd be playing bass like a guitar with only four strings," Hutcherson says. "But it really required a different set of skills. Finding a good balance between keeping the rhythm and doing things that were compositionally interesting was a constant challenge. Even though we were in Covid lockdown most of the time, there wasn't any time to be bored."

JASON SINN



Billy Strings with his signature Preston Thompson acoustic

Billy Strings

IT TURNS OUT ONE OF THE WORLD'S HOTTEST YOUNG BLUEGRASS PICKERS KNOWS HIS WAY AROUND A SLAYER SONG

By Alan Paul

BILLY STRINGS GREW up in a trailer park in rural western Michigan watching and listening to his father drink beer, smoke weed and play music with his friends. He wanted in, so his parents gave him a plastic guitar when he was 3 — and his first real guitar a year later. That one came about because of his stepfather's generosity and the kindness of an antique-store owner.

"There was a guitar hanging on the wall of this place with a light shining down on it, like light from heaven — and I needed that guitar," Strings says. "I threw a fit for it 'cause my dad just told me he didn't have the money and the old lady there said, 'He really wants it. How much do you got?' My dad said, 'I got 30 bucks to my name' and she said, 'I'll take it.' And my dad spent the last $30 he had in his wallet on that guitar for me."

We should all thank them both, because Billy Strings has emerged over the last few years as not only the hottest young bluegrass picker in the land, but as one of the most original, fiery, inspiring guitarists, period. On his third album, *Renewal*, released last September, the 28-year-old continues to stake his claim to being not only a scorching bluegrass flat picker but a highly original talent. He runs his custom Thompson dreadnaught through an extensive pedal board, 27 effects that allow his stage shows to veer from straight bluegrass to covers of Grateful Dead, Pink Floyd, even Slayer, played with proper tones, attack and intent. He never sounds like a dilettante.

Last summer, Strings joined Grateful Dead drummer Bill Kreutzmann for a series of shows that had him strapping on a Les Paul and letting it rip on Dead songs with a dexterity that surprised even his biggest fans.

"It's fun because it's just so different," Strings says. "It's not that I don't know how to play electric guitar, because when I was a teenager I was in metal bands and my brother and I were heavy into classic rock, like Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin and the Beatles. But I pretty much abandoned the electric guitar at about 17 and went fully back into flatpicking. It's been sort of an extracurricular activity ever since. I'm definitely the most comfortable with an acoustic guitar in my hands."

"There was a guitar hanging on the wall with a light shining down on it, like light from heaven — and I needed that guitar"
— BILLY STRINGS

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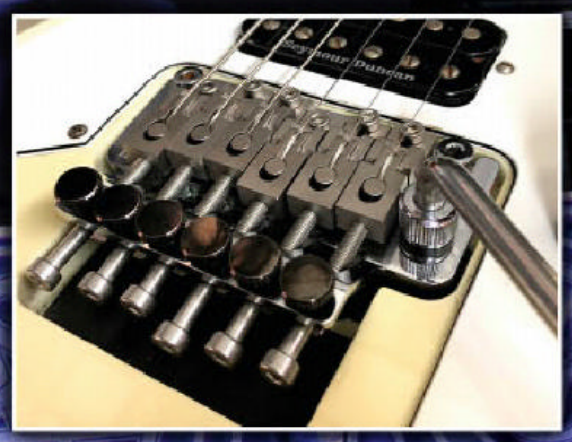

BIG BLOCK PERFORMANCE

Photo by Adam Reiver

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SQUEEZE

Glenn Tilbrook and Chris Difford — the songwriters, vocalists and guitarists behind Squeeze's seemingly bottomless bag of tasty-guitar-solo-fortified hits — answer readers' questions

Interview by James Wood

Q: CAN YOU TELL US WHAT KIND OF GUITARS YOU STARTED ON, AND WHAT YOUR FIRST "BIG SPLURGE" INSTRUMENTS WERE?

— BILL JACOBY

TILBROOK: I started out on an electric guitar my dad bought me called a Guyatone. With a Jimi Hendrix influence, the first proper guitar I got was a 1959 Strat. It was a lovely guitar and the best Strat I ever had. It's in the video for "Take Me I'm Yours." It played like a dream but was stolen. My go-to guitar now has been the same for over 30 years, and that's my 1967 Telecaster with a Parsons/White [*B-bender*].

DIFFORD: I started on a Gibson Melody Maker and then moved to Telecaster and have been on them since 1979. The guitar I play most now is made by a guy named Danny Ferrington. He's made guitars for Johnny Cash and Elvis Costello, among many others. It's a light Telecaster that doesn't weigh on your shoulder as much and has such an impressive sound.

Q: What was your initial reaction to audiences in America when you first performed there?

— Dana Moore

TILBROOK: When we were younger in the first flush of our career, it was pretty unbelievable, the reception we got in the States. Everyone was more enthusiastic and the response was bigger and warmer. We had a pretty good time in the U.K. up to that point, but America was something else for us. Speaking as someone who had always dreamed of going to the U.S., when I finally got there it was everything I had hoped it would be.

Q: If Chris hadn't placed the ad in the sweet shop window and Glenn hadn't answered it, do you both have any idea what direction your careers might've otherwise taken?

— Mary Sikorski

TILBROOK: I could've been an astronaut or deep-sea diver for all I know. I'm lucky I was one of those people who just naturally loved music. All the basis of my playing, I figured out myself and likewise with my writing. I was inspired by all the music I'd heard, and it made me want to be a part of it.

DIFFORD: I don't think there was another avenue I was interested in. Music was the journey I wanted to take. So I think I would've carried on trying to be a songwriter and getting a band together. It was destiny meeting Glenn. We've had such an incredible journey together.

Q: Glenn, who was one of your first big guitar influences?

— Vic T.

TILBROOK: I started listening to guitar more carefully when I was 13, and my first big love was Jimi Hendrix. Everyone knows what an elite guitarist he was, but his playing was also sensitive and lyrical. Songs like "Little Wing" and "Castles Made of Sand" are seminal and part of my musical identity.

Q: One of the many things I've always loved about Squeeze are Glenn's unique and plentiful guitar solos. Do you have a favorite Squeeze guitar solo?

— Steven Snyder

TILBROOK: I'd choose the solo from "Some Fantastic Place" because that's me channeling Brian May. I've always loved his playing. It combines all the things I personally like, including a chord sequence that's not easy to solo over. Also, the building shook with how loud the amps were at the time I recorded it.

DIFFORD: There are so many. Glenn is a master guitarist and, in my opinion, right up there with the Jeff Becks of this world. The very considered guitar solos on "Some Fantastic Place" and "Another Nail in My Heart" are so inspiring to listen to.

Q: Glenn, when working out solos, do you tend to improvise or painstakingly agonize over what sequence of notes would sound right?

— Mark Wainwright

TILBROOK: When I first started

EBET ROBERTS/REDFERNS

Squeeze's Chris Difford [*left*] and Glenn Tilbrook perform at NYC's Radio City Music Hall, July 13, 2010

out, I'd sit and work out a solo, like the solo for "In Quintessence." I remember working that solo out in the bathroom in the studio. The solo for "Another Nail in My Heart" really introduced me to the concept of using recording as an ideas device that you could edit by dropping in. You can think of it as a series of notes you put together to make a different tune, which is how I now approach my solos. I love working something out that's melodic.

Q: What is the most embarrassing or uncomfortable moment you've ever had as an artist?
— Amy Ropple

DIFFORD: I suppose it was when we first went to New York. We played a place called The Hurrah Club. There were not a lot of people in the audience on the dance floor that night — but there was [*also*] Andy Warhol and Lou Reed. It was frightening to play in front of those guys. It was a very interesting atmosphere from what I can remember.

TILBROOK: I once had an acute bout of food poisoning when I was doing a solo show in Wales. I went onstage and knew immediately that something wasn't right. I was very determined and played for almost 40 minutes before I knew I had to leave the stage. All ends were sparking, let's put it that way. [*Laughs*]

Q: What's the most psychedelic song Squeeze have ever written?
— Enrique Torres

TILBROOK: That's a good one. I'd say "F-Hole" from *East Side Story*. It has a convoluted chord sequence and a wonderful story lyric by Chris. It's glorious.

Q: If you could choose any musical artist to cover one of your songs, which artist and song would you choose?
— Matt Dacey

TILBROOK: I would choose Willie Nelson to cover "Some Fantastic Place."

DIFFORD: Lady Gaga singing "Tempted" would also be amazing.

TILBROOK: Erykah Badu actually did a version of "Tempted." It's my favorite version of one of our songs, ever.

Q: What's your songwriting process like and has it changed much over the years?
— Sarah V.

DIFFORD: I'm primarily the lyricist of the partnership and spend my time writing lyrics. The process is pretty much the same as it's always been. I send Glenn the lyrics and he writes the music. It's like Bernie Taupin and Elton John, but without all the money. [*Laughs*]

TILBROOK: I like to assemble a lot of different things and then go through and figure out what can work. Sometimes it can take years to work out an idea. We did a song called "Departure Lounge" from *The Knowledge* [*2017*] that I'm really proud of. Musically, I had it kicking around for eight years and couldn't find any way to use it until Chris came up with this lyric — and everything suddenly seemed to fit.

Q: I remember reading a few years back that you were

Squeeze in 1982 [*from left*]: Don Snow, Glenn Tilbrook, Gilson Lavis, Chris Difford and John Bentley

thinking of re-recording some very early unreleased Squeeze material. Is that still a plan?
— Steve Brown

TILBROOK: We wrote the bare bones of a musical back in 1974 that Squeeze never recorded but has really stood the test of time. We've been dusting it down recently and next year [*2022*] we're going to go in and record it and release it on the 50th anniversary of it being written.

Q: 2021 marked the 40th anniversary of *East Side Story*. Can you tell me the origin of "Tempted"? *— John C.*

DIFFORD: It was literally written on a cigarette box in the back of a taxi. We recorded it at Eden Studios in London with Elvis Costello, and it was Elvis' idea that Paul Carrack should sing it.

TILBROOK: We originally wrote and recorded a different version with Dave Edmunds producing that was more poppy, and I sang it. The song was beautiful, but the poppy-ness of it detracted from the sentimental. When Paul Carrack sang it, you just knew that was the way for it to go. It just took us a little while to get there.

Q: I always thought "It's Over" would suit any kind of musical style. Are there any songs that you'd ever consider revisiting and changing the style of music?
— Peter Heritage

TILBROOK: We're doing a version of "F-Hole" that's more psychedelic than the record. We've changed little bits, and it feels a little more contemporary in a strange way. It's such a powerful song. We've never done it live before, but we're doing it now.

On a scale of one to 10, how cringe-worthy is it when you watch the band's old music videos?
— Susan Marie

DIFFORD: 10! [*Laughs*] I wouldn't want to do any of them again.

TILBROOK: I don't really spend much time watching the old videos. Although someone did send me a link to a Squeeze show from Binghamton in 1982. I found that to be very instructive to watch because I'd never seen it before and we had split up by the end of that year. The band was really good, although we all played a million miles an hour. That's just how we were back in those days. The videos? I can't imagine why I'd ever want to sit down and watch those again. [*Laughs*]

Q: "King George Street" [*from 1985's* Cosi Fan Tutti Frutti] is pure genius. How'd you manage to make a song in the key of E so progressive? I'm curious as to how you developed that progression.
— Dave Fisher

TILBROOK: I'd be really interested to know if the person who asked this question had seen us on the last tour. We're doing a different version of it. It's much more like how I originally wrote it. I have a long-standing love of Fleetwood Mac, and it's more like a Fleetwood Mac song. It's more gentle than the record, and that's how we're doing it again. It's a beautiful moment in the set. The record was very bombastic, which was very 1985.

Q: Of all highlights of your career, is there anything that stands out to you as most memorable?
— Chad K.

DIFFORD: There are so many, to be honest. Playing Madison Square Garden just before the pandemic was extraordinary. We had played there twice before, but I don't remember either of those occasions because I was a different person. But to go on stage and see 22,000 people singing our songs was an emotional feeling.

TILBROOK: There are certain stages of your career that are really good. One of them is when you realize you've got an audience bigger than what you've previously had. When we first came to America, we played clubs and people were enthusiastic and bemused. By the third time we came back, there were a lot more people. It was a beautiful shock. The enthusiasm was something we hadn't experienced in the U.K. I also remember when we were with Daryl Hall and John Oates at Madison Square Garden just before lockdown. We played our set and people went bananas. We felt like we'd done one of the best shows we'd ever done. That was a pivotal moment and one I'm very proud of.

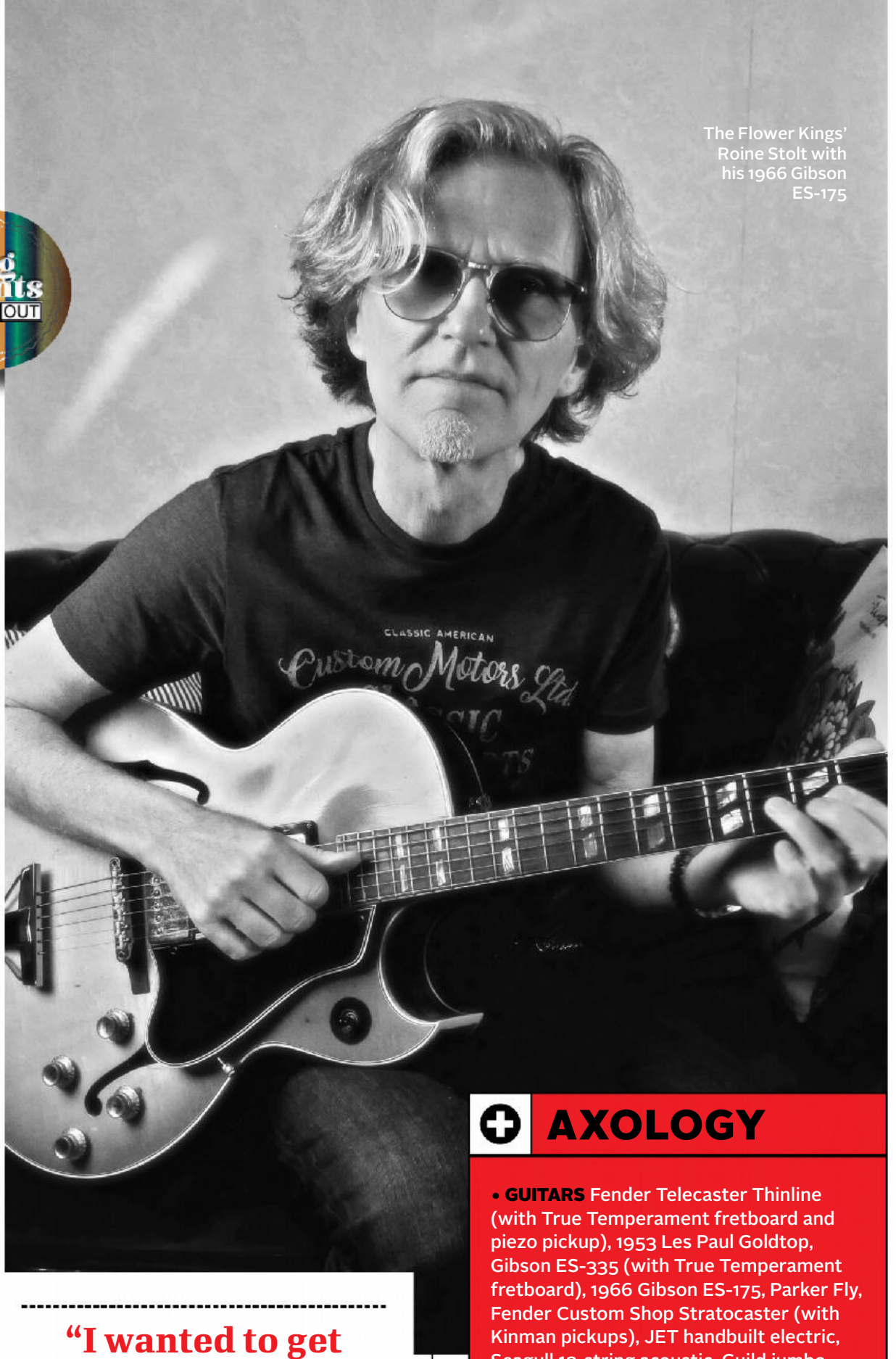
MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

Prog Points INSIDE OUT

The Flower Kings

ROINE STOLT LEADS THE VENERABLE SWEDISH PROG-ROCKERS INTO THE FUTURE BY MINING THEIR PAST

By Gregory Adams



The Flower Kings' Roine Stolt with his 1966 Gibson ES-175

ROINE STOLT MOVED backwards to progress for his Flower Kings' latest double album, *By Royal Decree*. While prepping the band's 15th full-length, the Swedish prog great had been remixing a series of Nineties-period Flower Kings records for an upcoming set of reissues. That nostalgic look back also included rediscovering decades' worth of unused recordings he had tucked away. He liked what he heard.

"I was listening back to music we did 20 years ago, and music I'd done even before that. I could feel there was something different. Some of it felt more exciting — maybe not as professional, almost childish," Stolt suggests of riffs he found while combing through digital file folders of song ideas, some of which are finally coming to pass on *By Royal Decree*. The record integrates that youthful drive with a regal elegance, whether riding royal purple undulations of Seventies-styled prog ("The Great Pretender"), pomp-and-circumstance lead waggling ("Revolution") or dew-glistened psych-pop ("We Can Make It Work"). That joy extends to awe-struck lyrics about astral scenes ("A Million Stars") and the promise of a better tomorrow ("Time the Great Healer").

"There was a feeling you can get from the older albums that was lost on some of the later albums — some of those were kind of gloomy, to be honest," Stolt admits, adding, "I wanted to get back to that positive feel [*on* By Royal Decree], with joyful melodies and bigger arrangements." The Flower Kings' collective exuberance also makes sense when you consider that while 2020's *Islands* was comped together via remote session work due to Covid, the players all converged upon Varnhem, Sweden's Fenix Studios to track this 18-track, pop-timist epic.

"I wanted to get back to that positive feel, with joyful melodies and bigger arrangements"
— ROINE STOLT

A prominent piece of Stolt's sound this time around is his whimsically multi-faceted wah work, with his Cry Baby yielding anything from a memorably treble-crushed series of bends on his "Evolution" lead, to a more traditional, funkified plinkiness as he supports an oboe solo on "Blinded." "I'm [*generally*] not looking for the wah effect," he says. "Basically it's about shaping the tone or pushing the amp so it screams a little more."

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** Fender Telecaster Thinline (with True Temperament fretboard and piezo pickup), 1953 Les Paul Goldtop, Gibson ES-335 (with True Temperament fretboard), 1966 Gibson ES-175, Parker Fly, Fender Custom Shop Stratocaster (with Kinman pickups), JET handbuilt electric, Seagull 12-string acoustic, Guild jumbo six-string; Mahalo ukulele
- **AMPS** Orange TH30 with 2x12 cabs, Mesa/Boogie TA-30, Fender Vibrolux combo, Marshall JTM45
- **EFFECTS** Dunlop Cry Baby 95Q wah, Keeley Aria compressor/overdrive, Strymon El Capistan dTape Echo, TC Electronics Shaker vibrato, Dunlop Volume (X) DVP3, Ramble FX Twin Bender fuzz, Victory Amps The Countess Valve Overdrive

Though Frankensteined-by-design, *By Royal Decree* is seamless, even leaving Stolt guessing how it was stitched together. "I'd have to look at the receipts," he says with a laugh. "I'm at the point where I really can't tell what's the old stuff and what's new. That is a good sign, because obviously the formula works."

Volbeat [*from left*]: Kaspar Boye Larsen, Michael Poulsen, Rob Caggiano and Jon Larsen

[*facing page*] Caggiano and Poulsen on stage in Madrid, October 9, 2019

Playing Those Mind Games

VOLBEAT'S MICHAEL POULSEN AND ROB CAGGIANO ON THE PENT-UP ENERGY AND FALSE STARTS THAT LED TO THEIR BACK-TO-BASICS NEW ALBUM, *SERVANT OF THE MIND*

By Jon Wiederhorn

IN MARCH 2020, when it became clear that Volbeat (and every other artist) would be off tour for months due to the Covid outbreak, frontman Michael Poulsen started writing the follow-up to the band's 2019 album, *Rewind, Replay, Rebound*. As a gift preview for fans, Volbeat released two songs from the album — "Wait a Minute My Girl" and "Dagen Før" — on June 2, 2021. The former is a ramped-up slab of psychobilly that sounds like the Misfits crossed with the Cramps (replete with piano and sax solo). The latter is a passionate rock ballad with female vocals, light arpeggios and long, slow guitar hooks. Both songs were started *before* the pandemic and were two of the first recorded for Volbeat's eighth studio album, *Servant of the Mind*. The upbeat tunes were well-received; "Wait a Minute My Girl" became the band's ninth single to top the *Billboard* Mainstream Rock chart.

Anyone who thought the rest of *Servant of the Mind* would offer more of the same — when it surfaced six months later — was in for a surprise. Almost all of the songs on the new record are as heavy as Metallica's Black Album (one of Volbeat's greatest influences), and almost as dark.

"I had a lot of energy to vent, and I think that's where a lot of the heaviness comes from," says guitarist, vocalist and primary songwriter Poulsen. "First, you get really frustrated about tours getting canceled because it's always a lot of preparation for a tour and you're rehearsing, and that's a lot of work to be done. And suddenly you're told you could not tour. So there was that. But at the same time, I was watching TV and thinking, 'Oh my God, what has the world become? People are dying from this pandemic. Why is this happening?' So you get a little bit sad, frustrated and angry at the same time, and you're concerned about family and friends. So, picking up the guitar and writing riffs and working on lyrics, I definitely think I was expressing everything that was going on. If the pandemic didn't happen, I'm not quite sure the record would sound the way it does."

There's another reason *Servant of the Mind* is Volbeat's most aggressive, consistent and fluid release to date. Unlike the band's last few albums, which Volbeat wrote between tours and took as long as 18 months to complete, Poulsen bashed out the songs for the new record in 10 weeks and finished the lyrics in an additional two. Add that to the two-and-a-half weeks Volbeat spent in the studio with producer Jacob Hansen and the result is a spontaneous, back-to-their-roots album that Volbeat (Poulsen, lead guitarist Rob Caggiano, drummer Jon Larsen and bassist Kaspar Boye Larsen) didn't have time to belabor or overthink. So why did Volbeat work on

ROSS HALFIN

such a tight schedule when they were off tour for so long and didn't release *Servant of the Mind* until last December? Simple. They figured they were under the gun to deliver a new album and get back on tour.

"No one had any idea how long the pandemic would go on for," Poulsen says. "We thought we'd be back on the road after four or five months, so I thought I had only four months to write and record it. So that's what we did."

Although he's not interested in creating the band's next record under such a narrow timeline, Poulsen enjoyed creating *Servant of the Mind*. He worked methodically, and every time he picked up a guitar and plugged into a practice amp, molten metal, rock and rockabilly riffs poured out, along with a long string of undeniable melodies. He was almost always happy with the original arrangements, so as soon as he finished one song he moved on to the next.

"It was really fun and rewarding because it was like being back in the old days," he says. "When we started the band [*in 2001*], we were 17 or 18 and nobody knew who we were. There were no jobs out there for us, so it was just us and the rehearsal room. That was the only thing we could do, so we did song after song."

At the same time as Volbeat were laying the groundwork for *Servant of the Mind*, Caggiano, who has co-written with the group since he joined in 2012, was stuck in New York — not that he wanted to hop on a plane to Copenhagen to collaborate with Poulsen. Before the Covid vaccine was available Caggiano spent most of his time holed away in his friend's music studio fearing for the future of mankind as the death count rose exponentially every day. His guitars barely left their cases.

"My headspace was upside down, and it took me a while to even feel creative again," he says shortly after the release of *Servant of the Mind*. "Your headspace is everything as an artist, especially with music, and New York was weird and scary for a long time. It was like I was in a bomb shelter. Normally I'd be jamming on ideas and working on things. But it took me a long time before I could do that in any real way."

Caggiano's withdrawal from society kept him from wanting to work remotely. By the time he felt at all inspired, *Servant of the Mind* was fully recorded *sans* leads. At the end of 2020, Volbeat sent Caggiano the stem files for the album and Caggiano picked up his signature Jackson Shadowcaster, plugged into a Fryette Sig:X amp — which he has used since he was touring in Anthrax on the Big 4 tour — and started playing. At first, it was slow going and his solos weren't matching the galvanic crackle of the songs.

"I wasn't feeling inspired at all. It's crazy, and I really had to force myself to lay down some parts. I ended up playing everything and listening back to it a few days later. And I said to myself, "I need to do this again." What I had done wasn't bad; it just sounded forced to me. So I scrapped everything and re-did every song and it came out way better."

Poulsen agrees that *Servant of the Mind* might have been more sonically diverse if Caggiano had helped write the songs, but he says giving Caggiano sole responsibility for all of the leads on the record put the guitarist in a position to shine. "I believe the solos he put on this album are some of his best solos in Volbeat," Poulsen says. "It just happened the way it happened, but we definitely all made the best of it."

"I wasn't feeling inspired at all. It's crazy, and I really had to force myself to lay down some parts"
— ROB CAGGIANO

Caggiano still isn't sure why he had a false start before he was able to nail his parts. But even before he heard the songs, he knew he wanted his leads to differ from what he had done in the past. The solution involved a slight equipment modification and practicing styles he hasn't relied on in the past.

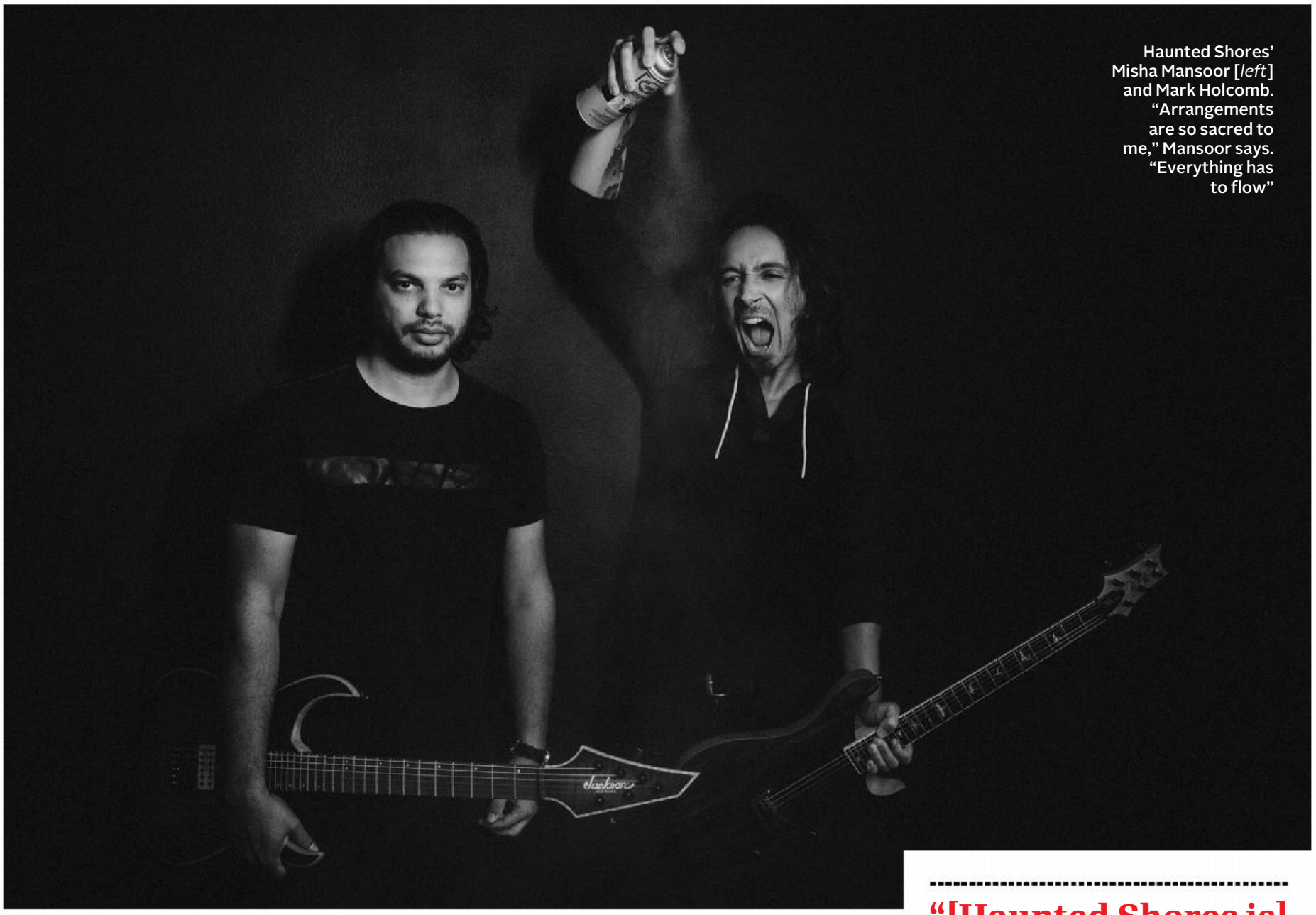
"I got hooked on these picks called V-Picks that a guy in Nashville makes," he says. "They're thick and stiff and they make the notes ring better for me. And that changed the way I hit the strings and, really, changed my picking technique. So I just worked on economy picking up and down mixed with some legato stuff. I also really wanted to emphasize melody, so every lead was like a song within a song."

For Poulsen, tracking "Becoming" was one of the highlights of the recording sessions. The track opens with thrash drumming and a dissonant buzzsaw guitar riff. Before the band plugged in, Poulsen rifled through a box of effects and was thrilled to see a Boss Heavy Metal HM-2, the signature pedal for the Scandinavian death metal scene he was a part of in the Nineties as a member of Dominus.

"Just for fun, I put it on and turned up all the knobs and played, and I said, "Oh my God, we sound like fucking Dismember right now! I love it!' So we used the pedal for that part, which could easily be a death metal riff. Then, when we switched to the verse, I went back to my standard guitar sound. That was so much fun."

As for the rest of his gear, Poulsen used several Gibsons and... some other stuff. "I have Gibsons. That's all I know," he says, then laughs. "I know exactly how I want my guitar to sound, and we have people who make sure my equipment is updated and works. As long as it sounds good, I don't care why. Rob's totally the opposite, but I'm just not interested in guitar nerdery."

JAVIER BRAGADO/REDFERNS



Haunted Shores' Misha Mansoor [*left*] and Mark Holcomb. "Arrangements are so sacred to me," Mansoor says. "Everything has to flow"

Haunted Shores

PERIPHERY MOONLIGHTERS MARK HOLCOMB AND MISHA MANSOOR DELIVER THE GOODS — AND THE SICK RIFFS — ON THEIR NEWEST OFFERING, *VOID*

By Gregory Adams

WHILE THE PUNISHING, progressive djent-thrash of Haunted Shores' *Void* (3Dot Recordings) marks the first new music from the instrumental duo since 2015, guitarists Mark Holcomb and Misha Mansoor haven't been passively resting their wrists this whole time — of course, both members also shred heavy with beloved D.C. prog metal unit Periphery. Though it seemed as if they'd ghosted on Haunted Shores, the pair were quietly hanging onto some especially harrowing riffs before rematerializing with this latest full-length.

"We're not one of those bands that just sits on our hands for years and then decides to write over a week; we always stockpile [*riffs*]," Holcomb says. "The fact that [*Haunted Shores*] has been dormant for six or seven years sucks, [*but*] it's the nature of the beast with how demanding Periphery can be."

That said, downtime arose for the guitarists in the spring of 2020 when the pandemic left Periphery's tour plans in limbo. To combat the Covid blues, Holcomb dug into a strict work schedule at his Austin home, loading up on coffee and riffing for hours. Between the java coursing through his veins and the existential mindfuck of the pandemic, much of what came pouring out of Holcomb during *Void*'s pre-production period was palpably perturbed.

"It's a very pissed-off, dark, pessimistic record," Holcomb confirms. "It sounds like a panic attack, and that word, *Void*, has always carried that energy for me."

For proof, take the quixotic, Escher staircase-spiraling of "OnlyFangs," which also modded a drop-C tuning in an ominously inkier direction by further dropping the fourth string to E minor. Mansoor also polished Holcomb's piece with its achingly melancholic chorus trill, the pair's long-time, ego-less relationship fostering those kinds of gut-checks.

"If Mark comes to me with really sick riffs — which he does — but if they don't necessarily fit the song, I can say that and no one gets hurt," Mansoor says of the swap, adding, "Arrangements are so sacred to me; everything has to flow."

Compared to Periphery, both guitarists allude to the overall freeing aspect of not having to adapt *Void*'s wildest, knuckle-busting moments live, instead embracing the unfiltered zaniness they pulled out of the abyss. Holcomb puts it best: "[*Haunted Shores is*] just me and Misha in a room passing a guitar back and forth and seeing what makes us laugh — like, 'Holy shit that's ridiculous; let's go with it' — and then signing off. That's it."

"[Haunted Shores is] just me and Misha in a room passing a guitar back and forth and seeing what makes us laugh"
— MARK HOLCOMB

EKATERINA GORBACHEVA

GUITARIST PRODUCER TONE HUNTER

POLYMATH

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"The Polymaths can truly do it all - rich clean and crunch tones, outrageously chunky high gain rhythms and beautifully vocal leads."

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A neat row of “in progress” Eastman T486 guitars. The company still builds its instruments by hand, using power tools only when they are absolutely necessary

Eastman

NEW TRADITIONAL STYLE

STORY BY
CHRIS GILL

PHOTOS BY
EASTMAN

EASTMAN CELEBRATES **30 YEARS** OF BRINGING TRUE HANDCRAFTED STRINGED INSTRUMENTS TO THE MASSES »

THE HISTORY OF THE EASTMAN MUSICAL INSTRUMENT COMPANY IS LIKE CONDENSING THE 300-YEAR EVOLUTION OF STRINGED INSTRUMENT DESIGN INTO ONLY 30 YEARS WITH A FOCUS ON THE GREATEST ACHIEVEMENTS AND BREAKTHROUGHS.

Founder Qian Ni started Eastman in 1992 with the goal of building high-quality yet affordable violins, violas, cellos and string basses using traditional craftsmanship and techniques. The success of those efforts eventually inspired Ni to start producing archtop guitars and mandolins in 2002, followed by steel-string acoustic flattops in 2008, thinline electrics in 2012 and solidbody electric guitars in 2016.

"We have redone the golden age of guitar building," says Eastman International Sales and Product Development Manager of Fretted Instruments Pepijn 't Hart. "But it all came naturally. From the beginning, our focus was to use traditional building techniques to provide the best possible instruments that anyone could afford. As Eastman grew, it became very important for us to offer a wider range of instruments. It was actually very logical for us to go from making violins to making archtops and mandolins and then progress to flattops, thinline electrics and solidbodies in much the same way that things progressed naturally over history."

Although Eastman's founder Qian Ni is Chinese and the company's instruments are manufactured in China, Ni and his company's story reads more like a tale of the American dream ripped from the pages of a Horatio Alger novel. After Ni graduated from Boston University School of Music, he started a business importing and selling student-grade classical stringed instruments that he loaded into his car and delivered himself to violin and music stores across the U.S. Instead of just trying to sell off his merchandise, Ni listened closely to retailers' complaints about the poor quality of the modern machine-made instruments. The main problems were that affordable violins were inferior and quality instruments were prohibitively expensive.

This situation inspired Ni to start his own company that manufactured stringed instruments. As a music scholar, he was familiar with the German luthier traditions of the 17th and 18th centuries, which were based on the guild system. Ni decided to model his factory after that approach combined with modern assembly line techniques to enable him to produce instruments at a lower cost. In essence, Ni assembled a team of specialists, each assigned to a specific task that they excelled at individually, such as shaping necks, carving tops and backs and applying finishes. Most of the work was — and still is — done using hand tools like chisels, files, gouges and planes. As a result, Eastman was able to produce truly hand-crafted instruments for affordable prices.

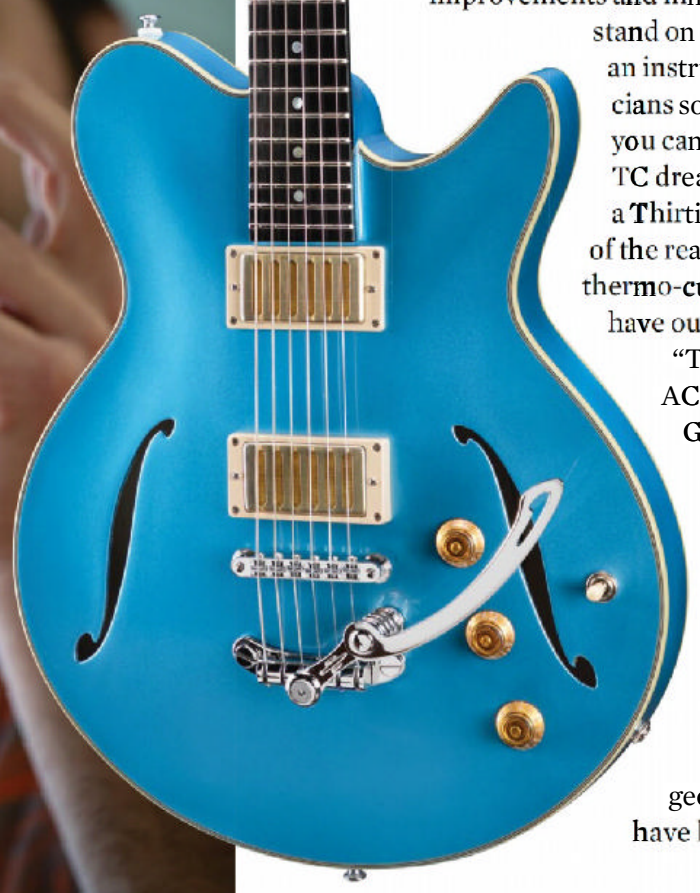
An assortment of Eastman models in different stages of production — plus the company's new Romeo LA, which was reviewed in the February 2022 *Guitar World* [*lower right*]. That's Eastman's head designer, Otto D'Ambrosio, in action at Eastman's Pomona, California, workshop [*top and bottom right*]

Eastman's eventual progression to building archtop guitars was essentially a happy accident. "I was given a book about archtop guitars as a gift," Ni says. "Immediately I became interested in the similarities between archtop guitars and our violins, violas, cellos and basses. As we began learning about these guitars we discovered not only the crossover in building techniques but also the rich history of luthiers who built violins and guitars. C.F. Martin, Lloyd Loar of Gibson and John D'Angelico all had experience in violin making. Antonio Stradivari even built some guitars! We started talking to different luthiers for advice and ultimately used Bob Benedetto's book about archtop guitar construction to build our first guitars.

"When we brought our first archtop guitars to the NAMM Show in 2002, the excitement that they generated was contagious," Ni continues. "That was definitely a pivotal moment for us. We have been so fortunate to work with so many talented people who have helped us along the way, and it all started with the reception we got at the NAMM Show."

Eastman's archtop guitars quickly earned acclaim from discriminating guitarists like Frank Vignola and John Pisano and luthiers like Claudio Pagelli and Otto D'Ambrosio, who collaborated with the company on archtop models and designs. "Qian has always reached out to talented designers to collaborate," Hart says. "He would meet people at guitar shows and ask if they could do something together. Rudy Pensa (retailer, **Rudy's Music** in New York) has remained an important advisor since the very start when we first offered archtops. Back in 2002 when Eastman was starting to build archtop guitars, Qian reached out to Otto D'Ambrosio,

MOST OF THE WORK WAS — AND STILL IS — DONE USING HAND TOOLS LIKE CHISELS, FILES AND PLANES. AS A RESULT, EASTMAN WAS ABLE TO PRODUCE TRULY HAND-CRAFTED INSTRUMENTS FOR AFFORDABLE PRICES



who is a talented designer who got his start as an apprentice for (luthier/repairman) Flip Scipio and (archtop luthier) John Monteleone and built guitars for Guild at their Westerly factory before starting his own business. In 2014 he decided to work full time for Eastman, and he is now our head designer. Our new Romeo is his design, which was our first step in making a thinline model that was truly our own. Now we're working on new solidbody designs, including our first offset body shape with six-on-a-side tuner headstock design."

The next logical step for Eastman was to start building flattop steel-string guitars, which the company introduced in 2008. The company's experienced craftsmen combined with the input of various collaborators enabled Eastman to quickly expand their customer base and reputation as a builder of high-quality affordable instruments. Eastman's line of flattop guitars is impressively extensive, encompassing traditional models from parlor to jumbo sizes, the modern AC series Grand Auditorium designs and even uncommon variations like the vintage Selmer-style Gypsy Jazz and nylon-string Cabaret-JB developed with luthier John Buscarino.

While many of Eastman's flattop models are inspired by designs from the 1930s "Golden Age," these guitars offer many improvements and innovations that allow the instruments to stand on their own merits. "Whenever we design an instrument, we hope that we can offer musicians something new," Hart says. "For example, you cannot get more traditional than our E20D-TC dreadnought. It has the look, feel and tone of a Thirties dreadnought instrument, but a big part of the reason for that is because the spruce top is thermo-cured, which is what the TC stands for. We have our own kilns that we use to torrefy woods.

"Then there are models like the AC722CE," he continues. "It's a modern Grand Auditorium flattop with a cutaway, side sound port, beveled lower bass bout and built-in pickup, which are all beautiful small details that show off our craftsmanship. It also features the Tonetight detachable neck mounting system, which was developed by Dana Bourgeois, who we started a partnership with in 2019."

Eastman's partnership with Bourgeois immediately paid dividends. "We have learned a great deal from Dana about the

finer details of flattop guitar production," Hart says. "He showed us things like how making the tops a little thicker and the braces a little thinner makes a huge difference in sound, which we've now implemented in our workshop. Last year we stopped shooting nitrocellulose finishes, which is something we've wanted to do for a long time since it's not great for the environment or the workers who spray it. It's unhealthy, but unfortunately many players still preferred nitrocellulose finishes so we continued to offer them. Dana told us that he stopped using nitrocellulose in 2002 and started using a special formula that he developed, which he shared with us. Last year we completely changed over to what we call the Truetone finish, which is very thin polyurethane with a lot of the same qualities as nitro. We did comparison tests all over the world, and no one could tell the difference in feel or tone between a nitro finish and our Truetone finish."

Although Eastman's thinline and solidbody electric models are relatively recent additions to the company's offerings, these instruments have benefitted from the know-how acquired preceding their introductions as well recent developments like the Truetone finish. The variety of thinline models produced by Eastman is particularly distinctive, as they offer an all-solid carved series (solid top, back and sides), solid carved top series (solid spruce top and laminated back and sides) and laminate series (laminated top, back and sides) thinline guitars, whereas most companies only manufacture laminate thinline guitars.

Eastman's solidbody models resemble several classic Gibson Les Paul models from the Fifties, but there are a few significant differences. "We introduced our first solidbody model, the SB59, in 2016," Hart says. "Although it's a single cutaway solidbody guitar with an arched maple top over a mahogany body, we weren't looking to duplicate the sound of a Les Paul. First of all, our model is lighter. The SB59 never weighs more than eight pounds, so it's much more comfortable to play. I wanted the SB59 to have a sound that was more airy and brighter, so I approached Jason Lollar to design a new pickup for us. He came up with the Eastman Imperial humbucker, which was a perfect fit. As a result, most players are finding the SB59 more versatile than a traditional Les Paul design."

Similar to how Eastman's flattop designs have progressed from models inspired by the classics to the introduction of models with modern, innovative features, the company's thinline and solidbody models are progressing as well. The Romeo thinline is Eastman's first electric model to offer a glimpse of what lies ahead. Head designer Otto D'Ambrosio came up with the main concept for the Romeo model, although the final specs came together somewhat by accident.

"At first, Otto showed me a design for an archtop thinline model," Hart says, "but I didn't want another jazz guitar. Also, the materials were close to what we already offered — a mahogany neck, solid mahogany back and sides, maple top, two humbuckers. In 2018, Otto and I traveled to the workshop to check on prototypes, and our head builder told us that they were having trouble getting mahogany that was good enough quality for routing out the back and sides from a single piece. He asked if he could use laminated mahogany instead, and we decided to give that a try.

"When they made the next prototype, they also switched the top from solid maple to solid spruce and switched the neck from mahogany to maple. None of these new changes were asked for, so it turned out to be a freak accident. When the guitar came in, I started playing it and thought it was unbelievable. I could do everything from bright Telecaster tones to warm jazz tones on it, but it also had a unique voice that was all its own. Suddenly, it made perfect sense to me, and we pushed for it. Shortly afterwards, Qian walked by and saw the guitar, and he said, 'That's the future of our guitars.' As always, he was absolutely correct."

Even though Eastman has grown significantly over the last 30 years, the company still builds its instruments by hand, using power tools only when they are absolutely necessary. As demand for Eastman guitars has increased, that presented a few challenges.

"There is no button we can push that allows us to build more instruments at once," Hart says. "The majority of our building process is done by hand, which is something we are very proud of and don't want to change. That is truly the unique characteristic of an Eastman. Sometimes customers will want us to duplicate the neck on an Eastman model they own, but we can't really do that as all of our necks are shaped by hand and every neck has a specific individual feel."

Eastman has covered impressive ground in its 30 years — after all, duplicating 300 years of stringed instrument development in that timespan is no small feat. However, even though the company has made many notable achievements over that time, Qian Ni says he looks forward to the growth that lies ahead.

"As a relatively young company we are always learning, which is a gift and challenge," he says. "We are always trying to improve and be better at what we do. We always have to balance what we want to do with what we can actually do. So far it's worked out well, and we are excited for the next 30 years. Our philosophy has been to try to build the highest-quality instruments for beginning students to professional musicians. We are a people-first company. Our team around the world is the heart and soul of Eastman." GW

Pepijn 't Hart, Eastman's international sales and product development manager of fretted instruments, shown here with an Eastman T58/v

JAMES VANDERENDE

Eastman

ROMEO LA

Feel wanted.

eastmanguitars.com

[*from left*] Polyphia's Scott LePage and Tim Henson with Yvette Young in 2019

OLLY CURTIS/FUTURE

30 INSTRUMENTAL GUITARISTS WITH SOMETHING TO SAY

GW'S GUIDE TO TWO-AND-A-HALF DOZEN INSPIRING **INSTRUMENTAL MASTERS**, PLUS — IN MANY CASES — THEIR EXCLUSIVE ADVICE ON HOW TO KEEP YOUR OWN INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC ENDLESSLY INTERESTING. BY AMIT SHARMA

AS GUITARISTS SUCH AS LINK WRAY, HANK Marvin, Grant Green and Giovanni Paolo Foscarini (Look him up!) have taught us, compelling guitar-based music does *not* require vocals or lyrics. Below — inspired by our two cover stars — we offer up a guide to 30 (technically 31!) hard-working instro-centric guitarists whose solos are worth at least a thousand words.

30

JOE SATRIANI
TOSIN ABASI & JAVIER REYES
DONNA GRANTIS
NICK JOHNSTON
STEVE VAI
GUTHRIE GOVAN
YVETTE YOUNG
PLINI
OMAR RODRÍGUEZ-LÓPEZ
ERIC JOHNSON
NITA STRAUSS
JULIAN LAGE
MIKE SULLIVAN
MATEUS ASATO
TIM HENSON & SCOTT LEPAGE
MARK LETTIERI
MATTEO MANCUSO
MIKE DAWES
LARI BASILIO
ANDY TIMMONS
GREG HOWE
PAT METHENY
RORY FRIERS & NIALL KENNEDY
ANGEL VIVALDI
JASON BECKER
MARCOS MENA
JOHN McLAUGHLIN
JEFF BECK

JOE SATRIANI

MUCH LIKE HIS old student Steve Vai, Joe Satriani's influence has echoed in the waves of guitarists that have come after him. His ear for big, bluesy hooks and liquid legato lines set him apart early on — as evidenced by the enduring popularity of his solo albums like *Surfing with the Alien, Flying in a Blue Dream* and *The Extremist*, his session work with Mick Jagger and, in more recent years, his achievements in supergroup Chickenfoot.

"Context is everything," he once told me. "It's all about how you apply the artistry. It has to make sense [*at*] that moment in time. Imagine you're playing music for a scene in a film with a cute baby walking toward the camera. You wouldn't play the most grotesque and dissonant notes possible, right? But what if that baby was covered in blood and had a huge knife in its hand? That's totally different! I can't say flat nines always sound bad... they sound perfectly beautiful in Phrygian or Phrygian dominant. But if you play a C♯ when everyone else is in C major and you are going to stick out. *There's* the context!" To find out about Satch's newest music, head to page 54.

LISTEN NOW: "Cryin'," "Flying in a Blue Dream," "Nineteen Eighty"

TOSIN ABASI & JAVIER REYES

FEW PLAYERS OF the last decade or so have felt quite as innovative as Tosin Abasi, whose use of extended-range instruments and thumb-slap techniques have blurred the lines between guitar and bass in the most mesmerizing ways. There's so much low-end info in his lines, as well as those of Animals As Leaders co-guitarist Javier Reyes, that there's no need for a bass player in the band. Why bother when you have two eight-strings? Though their early albums were more rooted in tech-metal, 2014's *The Joy of Motion* saw the trio expanding more upon their fusion influences, and with stunning results. This year's fifth studio album, *Parrhesia,* stands as one of the most anticipated instrumental rock albums of 2022. For more about that, head to page 46.

LISTEN NOW: "Physical Education," "Arithmophobia"

DONNA GRANTIS

THE NAME DONNA Grantis may sit among the more obscure in this list, but her credentials speak for themselves. In 2012 the Canadian guitarist was hired by Prince as part of his 3rdeyegirl trio, touring around the world and eventually releasing the

Animals As Leaders' Tosin Abasi with an Abasi Concepts Larada 7

chart-topping *Plectrumelectrum*, as well being involved in the late funk star's New Power Generation supergroup. "Donna can whup every man on guitar, bar none," said the Purple One at the time. After his passing in 2016, Grantis started working on her *Diamonds & Dynamite* solo debut of 2019 — channeling Jimi Hendrix at his most experimental via the jazz rock wizardry of John McLaughlin and Jeff Beck, and even roping in Mike McCready for two tracks.
LISTEN NOW: "Elsa," "Lioness"

NICK JOHNSTON

OUT OF THE newer generation of instrumental fusion rock players, Schecter endorsee Nick Johnston is certainly one of the most revered. The Canadian virtuoso seems to have the perfect blend of tone and phrasing, generally sticking with single coils on low gain to bring out the nuances encased within his stunning usage of legato and hybrid picking. But more than anything else, it's his note choices that have elevated him far — often lingering on the less-expected outside notes for full dramatic tension before reining it back in.
LISTEN NOW: "Atomic Mind," "Remarkably Human"

STEVE VAI

MANY GAME-CHANGING guitarists emerged during the Eighties, though none felt quite as revolutionary as Steve Vai. After a period of playing with stadium rock royalty like Whitesnake and David Lee Roth, he released his second solo album, *Passion and Warfare,* in 1990, not only embracing the unconventional in his approach to guitar but also the music framing it — using a wide range of instrumentation to bring his otherworldly manifestations to life. Where perhaps other shred heroes of the same era may be more connected to blues or harmonic minor scales, Vai's creativity with the Lydian mode in particular is one of many things that set him apart. For more about this brash young newcomer (and his new album), check out the March 2022 issue of *GW*.
LISTEN NOW: "Blue Powder," "Tender Surrender," "Teeth of the Hydra"

GUTHRIE GOVAN

THE TERM "BEST guitarist in the world" is thrown around a little too loosely, but if there was a player who's been able to realize the full creative potential of his or her instrument time and time again, and in a whole variety of styles, it's Guthrie Govan. There's been endless praise for how Govan has conquered just about every technique on guitar and at blistering speeds, but it's the fusion maestro's impeccable note choices and phrasing that have made him undoubtedly one of the finest to ever pick up the six-string.

The U.K. virtuoso released *Erotic Cakes* in 2006, an album that's often regarded as the greatest instrumental rock album of the last two decades, though there's never been a follow-up, only adding to the record's cult status. Since then, Govan has been busy working as a session musician, with stints playing for artists as diverse as Hans Zimmer, Steven Wilson and Dizzee Rascal, as well as recording and touring with the Aristocrats.

"Listen to those bluegrass licks that feel like 16th notes forever; the excitement for me is almost like watching someone run down a steep hill trying not to trip over. But those outside notes operate in the same way when it comes to bebop licks or Bach partitas for solo violin. You notice there's a template, almost skeletal version of the line. Look at the notes falling in important parts of the musical pulse; generally those are the nice notes reinforcing the chord you're listening to. In between, the chromatic notes add to its sense of movement. I guess if you listen to enough chromatic notes, you start to like them!"
LISTEN NOW: "Wonderful Slippery Thing," "The Ballad of Bonnie and Clyde"

YVETTE YOUNG

FEW GUITARISTS SINCE Eddie Van Halen have managed to make two-handed

JEN ROSENSTEIN

techniques look and sound quite as impressive as Covet guitarist Yvette Young, who has delved deep inside her piano past to carve her own identity as a guitarist. Then there's her use of altered tunings — approaching electric guitar in ways very similar to a modern fingerstyle acoustic player, using a myriad of taps, harmonics and open strings to turn her instrument into what can feel like an orchestra.

"I always put emphasis on trying to create a compelling melody that tells a good story," she says. "I try to enhance the meaning of the story I want to tell... by selectively coloring in parts of the song with different effects. I also make sure the riffs are strong. If a riff is good enough, you can actually just repeat it through an entire song without people noticing. You can even vary it up rhythmically or dynamically (with effects) to keep it from going stale too. I sing all my parts first before I can play them — this way I ensure that I'm writing the music that wants to be written rather than let comfort or habit of shapes dictate what I write."
LISTEN NOW: "Shibuya," "Ares"

PLINI

BANDS LIKE PERIPHERY and Animals As Leaders have led the charge in tech-metal over the last decade or so, using complicated patterns and rhythms to take their music in new directions. Australian guitarist Plini may well be one of the newer names within that scene, but although he's only two albums in, he's already making some serious headway into becoming one of its brightest-burning stars.

"If I told you the secret to making good instrumental music, it wouldn't be a secret," Plini tells us. "But I think for me, the key is focusing on the 'music' part, rather than the 'guitar' part. Of course, there will be moments where I want to remind the listener that I've spent almost 20 years playing guitar in my bedroom, but mostly, the goal is to use guitar proficiency as one tool among many to find meaningful emotions to express and stories to tell. When I was getting into the electric guitar, I got the *Anthology* compilation albums of Steve Vai and Joe Satriani, and that sent me on a wild journey. Between those two, there are many examples of just about everything that can be done technically, tonally, harmonically... and all within the context of great songwriting. More recently, Animals As Leaders and Tigran Hamasyan have inspired me to always look for new musical territory to explore."
LISTEN NOW: "Electric Sunrise," "Papelillo

OMAR RODRÍGUEZ-LÓPEZ

THOUGH THE AT the Drive-In and Mars Volta guitarist is mainly known for music with vocals, a sizable portion of his solo material actually falls under the instrumental bracket. His take on the six-string is one that's very different from the other players in this list, with more of an emphasis on effects and ambience as colors to create moods. His 2010 album with John Frusciante in particular is a potently psychedelic affair, twisting acoustic and electric atmospheres into kaleidoscopic lullabies that ease the listener into stupendous, otherworldly delights.
LISTEN NOW: "Zim," "O"

ERIC JOHNSON

THOUGH HE'S NOT always been strictly instrumental over his career, Eric Johnson's impact on music with the guitar at the forefront cannot be overstated. Emerging during the mid Eighties, at a time where guitar acrobatics and breakneck speeds were very much the *plat du jour*, Johnson chose to focus more on the melodic content of his creative endeavors — drawing heavily from his knowledge of chordal theory and blues scales. However, that's not to say his approach is minimalistic by any stretch. His mastery of two-note-per-string pentatonics at high velocity is quite staggering, which is why albums like *Ah Via Musicom* and *Venus Isle* have become a huge source of inspiration for modern blues players like Joe Bonamassa, Eric Gales and many more.

"When you look at a piano, you see more of an unlimited potential," he once told me. "[*Guitar*] seems smaller and more confined. The fretboard looks tiny compared to an 88-key piano. But we can decide how much we adhere to those confinements by pushing outside of them. If you listen to piano players, you can figure out their voicings and recreate it on guitar. You can push things wider than would apparently seem possible by imagining at the fretboard as something that is unlimited."
LISTEN NOW: "Cliffs of Dover," "Manhattan"

NITA STRAUSS

THOUGH SHE CUT her teeth playing in the Iron Maidens, which led to a spot in Alice Cooper's band, it feels like Nita Strauss' true arrival came in 2018 when she unveiled her instrumental solo debut, *Controlled Chaos*. Fusing elements of metalcore with a neoclassical shred style that cheekily nods to her family roots — with ties to Austrian composer Johann Strauss on her father's side — she's become one of the most prominent guitar heroes of the modern age. Her second album, slated for release later this year, will see her switching things up a bit with an even split between instrumentals and vocal-led pieces, including last year's "Dead Inside" with Disturbed frontman David Draiman (transcribed in the March 2022 *GW*).
LISTEN NOW: "Alegria," "Our Most Desperate Hour"

JULIAN LAGE

SINCE RELEASING his Grammy-nominated *Sounding Point* debut in 2009, California guitarist Julian Lage has gone from strength to strength — establishing himself as one of the most talented and prolific jazz players to emerge in recent times. On his many recordings, which include collaborations with Yoko Ono, John Zorn and Virgil Donati, every note screams class and control — with a distinguishable sense of restraint to focus on saying more with less. This year, he unveiled his latest album, *Squint*, through legendary record label Blue Note — as well as the 470 JL, his new signature hollowbody with Collings Guitars.
LISTEN NOW: "Boo's Blues," "Etude"

MIKE SULLIVAN

"IT'S IMPORTANT TO keep things minimal in order to leave room for your bandmates to add their own elements to the song," says Mike Sullivan of post-rock trio Russian Circles, a band who certainly know a thing or two about instrumental dynamics and atmospherics. "If you can't hum the melody, it's likely too busy or overly complicated. Play with dynamics by lowering your volume or distortion... maybe even don't play anything at all! One thing I learned over the years is if you're returning to a part of a song, introduce some sort of variation when it recurs, so the song has a sense of forward movement and growth. Don't just repeat a part verbatim... introduce a new texture or harmony."
LISTEN NOW: "Youngblood," "Mládek"

MATEUS ASATO

ADMITTEDLY THE BRAZILIAN guitarist may not have actually released anything "officially" as of yet, but it only takes a quick look at Asato's YouTube channel to appreciate why he's become one of the most widely respected guitarists of the new generation. The Suhr endorsee's

Joe Satriani with a signature Ibanez JS2480

instrumental compositions and dependably tasteful online performances have won him attention far and wide, even landing him session work on stadiums around the world with pop stars such as Bruno Mars, Jessie J and Tori Kelly.

One of Asato's most popular recordings/videos, an instrumental version of Crowded House's iconic late-1986 single "Don't Dream It's Over," is transcribed on pages 86 to 89.

LISTEN NOW: "The Pain," "Bells"

TIM HENSON & SCOTT LePAGE

CONTROVERSIALLY TAKING GUITAR to a future without "boomer bends" and drawing influence from electronic and hip-hop worlds far beyond that of typical six-string noise, it's crystal clear that Polyphia pair Tim Henson and Scott LePage have strong ideas about how guitars should sound in the modern age. Whether you agree with them or not, sticking to said guns is working out very well for them indeed, with both players being awarded their own Ibanez signatures and even jamming alongside the likes of Steve Vai, Joe Satriani and Paul Gilbert at the Ibanez 2020 NAMM Show showcase.

"We're kinda just doing whatever the fuck we want," said Henson in a conversation we had in 2018. "There's shit on our albums that's probably pretty out there! [*Laughs*] There are a lot more genres now. People just do wacky shit with music, and that probably makes the kids more open-minded these days. The funny thing is none of us can rap. The only thing we can do is play guitar, so the music we make is rap music through guitars... it's almost like a mixture of the two."

LISTEN NOW: "G.O.A.T.," "40oz"

JEN ROSENSTEIN

MARK LETTIERI

HEADING UP THE new wave of funk alongside Cory Wong, multiple Grammy winner Mark Lettieri is also one hell of a fusion player, with no shortage of interesting ideas up his sleeve. Last year's *Deep: The Baritone Sessions Vol. 2* proved once again just how versatile he is — knocking out monster grooves and mouth-watering licks in the lower register. 2021 also saw the arrival of his first instrument, the PRS Fiore. There's no one secret to creating instrumental music, he tells *GW*, other than sticking to clear and purposeful compositions.

"It's easy to try and cram as many ideas as possible into one song, when sometimes it's probably better to just write three different songs," Lettieri says. "Even if the sections you've come up with are all good individually, it doesn't always mean they're going to work collectively. Forcing ideas together can result in a song that sounds disjointed or scattered. With funk, or other groove-based forms of instrumental music, one thing to be wary of is the density of the arrangement, and this is something I'm constantly refining with my own music. There has to be room for the instruments to breathe as that 'space' is where the groove and vibe really resides."

LISTEN NOW: "Seuss Pants," "Goonsquad"

MATTEO MANCUSO

IT'S NOT OFTEN you hear of Joe Bonamassa describing another guitarist as "the one guy who freaks him out" — or Tosin Abasi doffing his cap to "a virtuoso beyond virtuosos," but then again 25-year-old Sicilian Matteo Mancuso is far from your average player. He started out on classical before switching to electric for more jazz and fusion-based musings — as demonstrated by his jaw-dropping covers of Guthrie Govan, Allan Holdsworth and Joe Pass on Instagram. Instead of using a pick, however, he chose to continue work in pure fingerstyle, using flamenco techniques to hit mind-boggling levels of speed.

LISTEN NOW: "Time to Leave," "Past Language"

MIKE DAWES

FOLLOWING IN THE footsteps of fingerstyle masters like Michael Hedges, Tommy Emmanuel and Andy McKee, U.K. guitarist Mike Dawes had become one of the rising stars of modern acoustic. In 2020 his solo rearrangement of Van Halen's "Jump" became an Internet sensation for its inge-

nious mix of synth lines, vocal melodies, guitar leads and rhythms. He points to Pierre Bensusan and Joe Satriani as early inspirations for big melodic hooks.

"Growing up on the music of players like that, I was always drawn to strong melody with creative harmony," Dawes says. "One tip I learned from touring with Tommy Emmanuel is that writing lyrics for your instrumental tune can be a great way to create a meaningful topline. If you're trying to write instrumental music, use your ears, not your eyes or any dumb social media metric. Timeless music creates an emotional response far beyond 'Wow, did you see that?!' Sometimes arranging your solo tune in a band context, or even transcribing it into Guitar Pro can afford you the opportunity to just step back and listen. Then comes the quality control away from the fingers."
LISTEN NOW: "Jump," "Boogie Shred"

LARI BASILIO

"THE KEY TO GREAT instrumental music lies in each musician's identity and their ability to make that personality appear in their compositions," says Brazilian melodic rock sensation Lari Basilio, who unveiled her LB1 Ibanez signature last year. "One thing that always catches my attention when listening to instrumental music — and it's the same thing I pursue when writing my own tunes — is a story told through melodic lines. I enjoy a well-told story that doesn't seem to be walking in circles. It begins, happens and resolves. A pretty remarkable instrumental album to me is *That Was Then, This Is Now* by Andy Timmons. The compositions are brilliant and well-structured compositions."
LISTEN NOW: "Sunny Days," "Not Alone"

ANDY TIMMONS

VERY FEW PLAYERS have been able to express and articulate themselves as well as (current *GW* columnist!) Andy Timmons. The longtime Ibanez and Mesa/Boogie endorsee has an approach to phrasing that can make even the most simple of lines sound beautiful, with so much depth and feel it makes you wonder how he's doing it.

"I don't think there's any one particular secret to making a great instrumental," he tells us. "It's really about following your personal muse so that it's as organic as possible. Authenticity is *everything*. For me that's generally going to be something melodic as I'm really just trying to write the song I want to hear, which is based on a lifetime of musical experience. Everything from Chopin to Hendrix gets put through the filter of 'me.' As a guitarist, one of the pitfalls is to feel pressure to include dexterous solos, which can be cool, but only if they serve the song. I was very happy to let go of that years ago."
LISTEN NOW: "Electric Gypsy," "Pink Champagne Sparkle"

GREG HOWE

AS A HIRED gun, Greg Howe has played for some of the biggest names in pop, from Michael Jackson and Enrique Iglesias to 'N Sync and Justin Timberlake. But it's his legendary Shrapnel solo albums and numerous collaborations that established him as one of the world's most formidable six-stringers. His 1988 self-titled solo record showcased a fusion rock legend in the making, with no shortage of attitude found in his notably wide sliding vibrato. His two albums with Richie Kotzen from the mid Nineties, *Tilt* and *Project*, documented to Shrapnel stars going head to head, while his 2003 jazz fusion odyssey with Dennis Chambers and Victor Wooten, *Extraction*, remains one of the finest instrumental records of its kind.
LISTEN NOW: "Kick It All Over," "Extraction"

PAT METHENY

MUCH LIKE THE late, great Allan Holdsworth, Pat Metheny doesn't so much play jazz as he does his own unearthly variant of it — a kind that no one else can come close to imitating — which explains why he's been headhunted by superstars like David Bowie and Joni Mitchell. Metheny is as dimensional as a guitar player can get, having applied his jaw-dropping techniques and theoretical knowledge to all kinds of situations, from more classic Wes Montgomery-inspired jazz musings to wonderfully ethereal world music and solo acoustic music like *One Quiet Night*. He's been notably active since the pandemic started, having released two studio albums and one live album. Let's hope that the burst of creativity continues through the coming years.
LISTEN NOW: "Bright Size Life," "Have You Heard"

RORY FRIERS & NIALL KENNEDY

OVER THE LAST decade or so, Belfast noise rockers And So I Watch You from Afar have made a good case for being one of the loudest propositions from Northern Ireland. Their fuzz-ridden transcendental instrumentals pack some serious tonal weight, transporting the listener through an array of sonic realms that feel like a voyage into the great unknown — a place where crunchy Telecasters, cranked Oranges and pitch-shifting pedals are able to do all the talking for them. This year's sixth album, titled *Jettison*, sees the quartet enlisting the likes of Emma Ruth Rundle and Clutch's Neil Fallon for "cryptic dialog" — but make no mistake, it's still very much instrumental music by nature.
LISTEN NOW: "Three Triangles," "Big Thinks Do Remarkable"

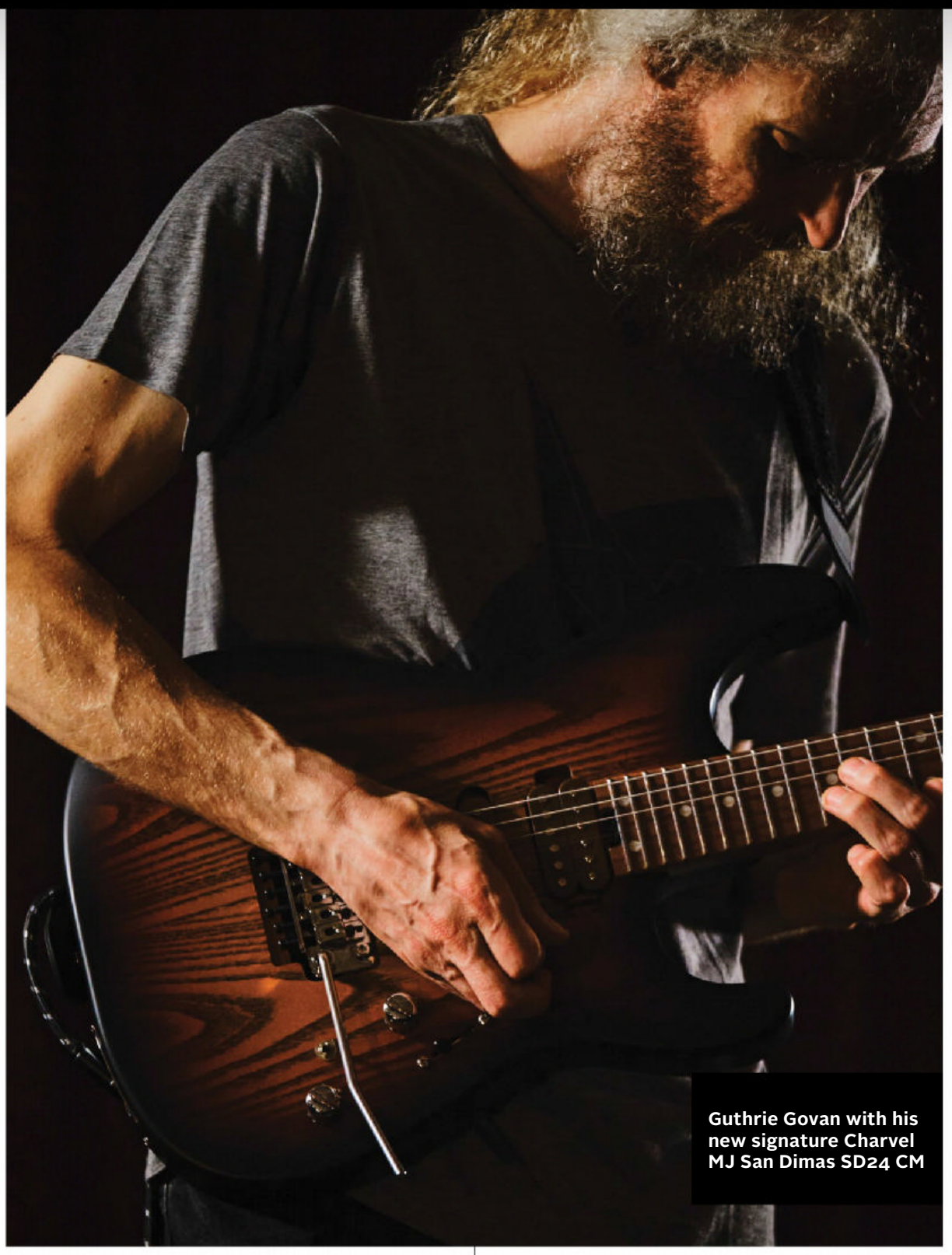
ANGEL VIVALDI

MUCH LIKE NITA Strauss, you can tell Angel Vivaldi has a connection to classical music before you've even heard him play a note — though, by his own admission, no famous relatives of the past. The New Jersey-born melodic shredder, who cites Kurt Cobain, Alex Skolnick, Eric Johnson and Yngwie Malmsteen as influences, switched from Ibanez to Charvel in 2018 and now has six-string and seven-string models in his signature DK24 NOVA series

"I break up guitar into three aspects," he once told me. "First there's the intervals, so you can play three simple notes in different orders, like E/A/G, E/G/A, G/A/E, G/E/A, A/G/E or A/E/G. The second element is the rhythm, the beat [*at which*] you play those notes. The final pillar is the phrasing; it's the finesse behind the fingers, the type of vibrato, whether you slide into notes, what techniques you use from the whammy bar to harmonics... all those little things that make each guitarist different. ... The great players are *instantly* identifiable."
LISTEN NOW: "A Martian Winter," "Serotonin"

JASON BECKER

IN 1989, WHEN Jason Becker was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as motor neurone disease or Lou Gehrig's disease, the doctors told him he only had another few years left to live. He may have lost his ability to play guitar, walk and speak — but the musical genius is still very much alive, composing intricate music by communicating with his eyes. His late-Eighties Cacophony records with Marty Friedman showcased some truly sublime musicianship, as did his solo debut, *Perpetual Burn*, and his first and only record with David Lee Roth, *A Little Ain't Enough*. In 2018, he released *Triumphant Hearts* — arguably the most dazzlingly compelling guitar album of its year — with a spectacular lineup of guests that included Joe Bonamassa, Richie Kotzen, Mattias Ia Eklundh, Neal Schon and more. Defiantly persevering through tragic circumstances,



Guthrie Govan with his new signature Charvel MJ San Dimas SD24 CM

SAM SHAW

his journey as a guitarist is quite possibly the most inspirational of them all.

"My advice for creating instrumental music would depend on what kind of tune you are making," Becker tells us. "Having a strong melody is a good starting point. If you find something that sounds nice, put all of your heart and soul into it. Try to do something that makes it unique to you. Think creatively. I try to make each of my songs special in its own way. I like to have different moods and flavors in one song. I never got off on having every song sound the same, with only one type of energy. Really, anything creative and different is cool."

LISTEN NOW: "Altitudes," "Once Upon a Melody"

MARCOS MENA

GUITARIST MARCOS MENA — one half of California math-rockers Standards — literally wrote the book on compositional guitar tapping (His popular workbook, *Compositional Guitar Tapping*, is available for $10 from marcosmena.shop.) And — if they've seen even *one* of Mena's many videos, readers of his workbook know they can have complete faith in its author. His mind-boggling two-hand tapping technique — not to mention his penchant for naming songs after a myriad of fruits (and/or the random lobster, starfish or shark) — have made him one of instrumental rock's more interesting characters and fiercest new talents.

"I want to make sure I can control all the aspects of melody and harmony, so my playing looks a little funny," Mena told GuitarWorld.com's Michael Astley-Brown in 2020. "I'm usually crossing my hands tapping with one hand and strumming with the other. ... However, I think it's never about how many techniques one can use but rather how the song sounds to the listener. Very few people will care about how you're playing guitar, but everybody cares about the sound that comes out of it."

LISTEN NOW: "Special Berry," "Papaya"

JOHN McLAUGHLIN

CITED BY NONE other than Jeff Beck as "the best guitarist alive," John McLaughlin's musical achievements are as vast as they are impressive. He started working with Miles Davis for what would be a stretch of albums through the late Sixties right up to the jazz pioneer's passing in 1991, while also inspiring a whole movement of guitar-led fusion rock in the Mahavishnu Orchestra during the early Seventies. As well as bridging the gap between Eastern and Western tonalities in ways that hadn't yet been heard, his machine-gun alternate picking and wide fretting-hand stretches bore the mark of a musician light years ahead of the rest. On top of his own sizeable solo discography, he's worked with Carlos Santana, Chick Corea and many more, also teaming up with Al Di Meola and Paco de Lucía for the legendary *Friday Night in San Francisco* live album that would set the benchmark for acoustic virtuosity in the early Eighties. For our new interview with McLaughlin, head to page 62.

LISTEN NOW: "Meeting of the Spirits," "Thelonius Melodius," "Acid Jazz"

JEFF BECK

IF THERE'S ONE figure whose influence and presence has never ceased to loom high over instrumental rock, it's Jeff Beck. There are many reasons for that: from the tones and techniques heard on his early solo albums of the mid Seventies — which helped popularize a new movement of jazz and fusion rock — to the endless creative well he draws from and that radical sense of "never playing the same thing twice." But it always comes down to how the U.K. trailblazer makes his guitar *speak*, often in ways every bit as lyrical as the human voice. He's been described as a guitarist's guitarist or a hero's hero for having broken down every barrier between him and the instrument.

"I'm an experimenter," Beck said in 2016, when quizzed on his reputation for pulling magic out of thin air. "Every album I've done, except for a couple of techno-y records, is different. You've got to hand it to the Strat; there are songs in that guitar. It's a tool of great inspiration and torture at the same time because it's forever sitting there, challenging you to find something else in it, but it *is* there if you really search... My Strat is another arm, it's part of me."

LISTEN NOW: "Freeway Jam," "Brush with the Blues" (the *Who Else!* version, of course), "Nessun Dorma" GW

TO DAW

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Tosin Abasi, photographed in Los Angeles in early February

THE TRUTH HURTS

TOSIN ABASI AND **JAVIER REYES** DISSECT **ANIMALS AS LEADERS'** BLUDGEONING NEW ALBUM, *PARRHESIA* (AN OBSCURE WORD OFTEN DEFINED AS BOLDNESS, FREEDOM OF SPEECH OR – IN SOME CASES – TO SPEAK THE TRUTH).

BY JOE BOSSO | PHOTOS BY JEN ROSENSTEIN

"I CALL IT 'sharpening the knife,'" says Tosin Abasi, describing the approach he and his longtime Animals As Leaders guitar partner Javier Reyes adopted when recording the group's super-aggressive fifth album, *Parrhesia*. "On the past couple of albums, we explored a lot of different directions; we got very experimental and we did some fusion-y stuff. This time out, Javier and I consolidated the elements we wanted to incorporate and we went for a more bludgeoning experience." He laughs. "That sounds pretty good, doesn't it?"

30
JOE SATRIANI
TOSIN ABASI & JAVIER REYES
DONNA GRANTIS
NICK JOHNSTON
STEVE VAI
GUTHRIE GOVAN
YVETTE YOUNG
PLINI
OMAR RODRÍGUEZ-LÓPEZ
ERIC JOHNSON
NITA STRAUSS
JULIAN LAGE
MIKE SULLIVAN
MATEUS ASATO
TIM HENSON & SCOTT LEPAGE
MARK LETTIERI
MATTEO MANCUSO
MIKE DAWES
LARI BASILIO
ANDY TIMMONS
GREG HOWE
PAT METHENY
RORY FRIERS & NIALL KENNEDY
ANGEL VIVALDI
JASON BECKER
MARCOS MENA
JOHN McLAUGHLIN
JEFF BECK

For Javier Reyes, the decision to operate at this maximum intensity was a no-brainer. "We did the more ambiguous thing, so this album is our way of telling people, 'Don't get things twisted — we can still go hard,'" he says. "We like the fusion-y jazz stuff; otherwise, we wouldn't have written it. But at the end of the day, our roots are in progressive metal. That's the core of our fan base — metal fans. So we wanted to go back and continue that train of thought."

It's been six years since Abasi, Reyes and drummer Matt Garstka issued an Animals As Leaders album (their last effort was 2016's *The Madness of Many*). That's the longest stretch between records since the band's 2009 self-titled debut. Abasi and Reyes first started compiling demos for the new set two years ago, during the first wave of the Covid pandemic, and they spent six months recording the album — four tracks were self-produced, while the remaining cuts were done in collaboration with the band's long-serving producer (and founding member of the D.C.-based prog-metal band Periphery), Misha Mansoor.

When asked if the pandemic's on-again, off-again lockdowns contributed in any way to the relentlessly belligerent nature of their new music, Abasi says, "It's nothing we talked about, per se. I don't think the album relates to the pandemic, but maybe some pent-up frustration came through. Basically, we just started molding the music, and we found that it was heavier than usual."

Indeed, the nine tracks on *Parrhesia* contain some of the most vicious moments Animals As Leaders have ever recorded. "Conflict Cartography" and "Monomyth" come at you like battering rams, with eight-stringed wonders Abasi and Reyes set on two modes: intense and high-octane intense. The aptly named "Micro-Aggressions" is a string-skipping punisher, with hot beams of blitzing riffs firing off in every conceivable direction — before you have a second to duck, another fierce salvo is on the way.

"Gestaltzerfall" — now there's a mouthful — flies across the sonic spectrum as the two guitarists summersault over each other while trading spiky, meticulously targeted body blows. There are brief reprieves in the assault — the whacked-out and woozy guitar lines of "The Problem of Other Minds" float over a rippling, hypnotic rhythm bed, and "Asahi" is a surprisingly gentle mood piece highlighted by graceful, legato soloing — but for much of the ride, *Parrhesia* will have listeners gripping their seats for dear life.

For those who have yet to Google, the

[*left*] Tosin Abasi with an Abasi Concepts Larada 8

[*right*] Javier Reyes plays his signature ESP JR-608 with Animals As Leaders at the most recent Winter NAMM Show, January 16, 2020

“DON’T GET THINGS TWISTED — WE CAN STILL GO HARD” — JAVIER REYES

definition of “parrhesia” is “boldness or freedom of speech” and, in some instances, “to speak the truth.” Abasi admits he thought it was “a cool word that encapsulates our approach to making sounds,” but he also sees it as a metaphor for the band’s philosophy. “There’s kind of an iconoclastic element to what we do that cuts against the grain, but it’s true to us. Considering the cultural discourse right now, there’s so much being said, and I think just the idea of being centered on truth and being committed to that has always been a compass we’ve used to direct how we write music.”

Javier, I read an older interview with you in which you said one of the band’s goals was to convince girls to come to metal. How’s that been working out for you?

REYES: [*Laughs*] Not very well, to be honest. At this moment, I’ve got about 98 percent males on my Instagram. I’ve accepted the fact that the audience is just guys, and I’m OK with it now. It’s 2022.

ABASI: He’s accepted it. [*Laughs*]

All right then. So as virtuosos, do you two feel a responsibility to push yourselves on the guitar at all times? Do you ever find it a burden?

ABASI: For me, it is. One hundred percent. The competitive element to playing guitar is a driving force, but it also can be a curse, because the likelihood that you’re “the best” is going to be pretty low. There can be an annoying element to virtuosity. Let’s say you want to express yourself a certain way in a song, but then you feel like the idea you wrote is too simple because you’re known for writing complex things. So that might mean you won’t go in that direction because you feel locked into this idea that your musical value is musical complexity.

Sounds frustrating.

ABASI: Sure. For me, as a lead guitar player, I see so much insane talent in the world right now. It almost makes you go, “Why even attempt it?” When that happens to me, I have to remind myself that it’s obviously more about unique contributions. I feel like I have some musical ideas that are worthwhile, and they’re more about individuality as opposed to some competition for cleanliness, speed and stuff like that. [*Laughs*] Not that I haven’t been guilty of participating in all that myself. I just think it can be a double-edged sword, for sure.

Two of your first videos from the album, “Monomyth” and “The Problem of Other Minds,” featured dance troupes interpreting the music. Do you have any kind of visual component in mind when you’re writing?

REYES: There’s no visual component in mind during the writing process, but I think we’ve always wanted to have some type of visual that’s equally as strong as the music. Some of our past music videos haven’t been of the same caliber as the two you mentioned, but we were just kind of following along with what the label wanted. This time around, we wanted to have something very compelling that partnered with the music, but that came after the writing. It’s not like Tosin shows up and says, “By the way, when I’m playing this riff in 11/16, I think we should have a video

JESSE GRANT/GETTY IMAGES FOR NAMM

with contemporary dancers." [*Laughs*]

ABASI: My partner is a visual artist, and we work together on some stuff — not for Animals As Leaders, but I do think we approached her about doing the album artwork. Then she had some ideas for a music video, and I think a lot of the "Monomyth" and "Problem of Other Minds" were visual ideas she already had. In the past, Javier and I talked about getting dancers to do something to visually represent the music, but I think we were thinking more contemporary, as in urban, where it was very rhythmically synced. We thought that that would be fun. But then it took on a different, more high art direction.

How do you two go about complementing and contrasting your guitar tones? With so many strings to work with, I imagine there are a lot of frequencies bopping around.

REYES: In the writing process, we don't necessarily worry too much about our tones clashing. It's all very section focused. If the rhythm guitar needs more low end, we'll put more low end on it. Things change a lot with us. During recording, Tosin might play one part and I play another, but when we get on stage, it can be completely opposite. So we're more focused on just what the song needs and what the recording needs, as opposed to what our individual needs are.

ABASI: It's interesting to me, because as a guitarist your tone is super personal. Jav has certain amp styles he likes — certain pickup voicings and all that stuff. And, of course, I do too. They're similar, but they differ in minor ways. When we get together, we take a pretty utilitarian, greater-good approach of "I know that's your favorite overdrive pedal, but it sounds weird in the mix, so we're going to use this other thing." We're very objective during mixing. Whether you like this or that, it's all about how it sounds in the end.

You've worked with Misha Mansoor in the past, and he's obviously a very simpatico ear in the studio. I'm curious, though — have you ever considered bringing in somebody completely outside your wheelhouse?

ABASI: That's a really great question. A few years ago, we were really interested in that. There's a Norwegian band called Jaga Jazzist; they remind me of progressive bands from the Seventies, but they have horn arrangements and hammered instruments and stuff. Anyway, the main guy in that band [*Lars Horntveth*] was someone

"The competitive element to playing guitar is a driving force, but it also can be a curse," Abasi says

who stood out to me as a potential producer. We've considered other people as well, but it's just never worked out. We self-produce a lot, which has its benefits as far as defining the sound for ourselves. Every once in a while, though, we do reach out for outside influence, just to get some different results. Maybe in the future we'll end up working with some other producers.

REYES: Given the complexity of our music, I think there's some concern with finding somebody who can understand what's happening with the guitar and drum parts. That's been one of the benefits we have with Misha: He gets what we're doing, 1,000 percent. In a lot of ways, he's partly responsible for our sound. He and Tosin wrote the first album together, and so that kind of gave Animals As Leaders a habitat to exist.

There are so many playing aspects to touch on in your new songs — almost too many. In "Monomyth," there are these chugging chords at the end. They don't even sound like a guitar; they sound like a door slamming.

ABASI: We're probably just palm muting. Right, Jav?

REYES: Yeah, it's just those chugs. I think it's a combination of the amp tone with how we're playing. It's just a very aggressive chug. There's nothing too crazy about it, but it is a little sick.

"Red Miso" starts out dreamy and soothing, and then it turns super scary. Did you ever think of just continuing the first mood and letting it be that?

ABASI: It's funny, but like I said, we set something in motion and we're not really always sure what's going to happen. On that beginning sequence, I was using an Eventide H9 pedal that has a stutter delay. I was just messing around with a clean tone and that delay, and that was the seed of the song. When we tracked it, that's when we made musical decisions in real time: "OK, try this. Let's add this. Try this section and accent these parts with heavy guitar." The song is a bit of a linear journey from dreaming to very aggressive. It could have ended up in a multitude of ways.

REYES: We try to think of how to get back to that first section and bring the song full circle, but things just happen naturally. With "Red Miso," by the time we got to that crazy part in the middle where it's just linear and nothing repeats, we were like, "OK, there's no returning back." The song kind of just started directing itself at that point.

"Gestaltzerfall" and "Asahi" have moments of beautiful legato playing. Between the two of you, who is the big legato guy?

ABASI: I feel like maybe Jav is, because he's got some classical slurs, like left-hand stuff.

REYES: Yeah. I don't really alternate pick that well, actually, so I rely on my legato.

There's an anxious quality throughout "Thoughts and Prayers." Is the contrast to the title intentional, and is it supposed to be a bit of social commentary?

ABASI: There's a cynical take on "thoughts and prayers" in that you have these events that are by the hands of men, but there's this uniform appeal to something that isn't man. I think at a point it started to just ring hollow. It's a layered thing, because the intent is one thing — you're sending thoughts and prayers — but in effect, are you even doing anything? It's kind of like the intentions there, but is it a way to not really have to do more?

I think the juxtaposition is about a type of helplessness. Whenever you hear "thoughts and prayers," it's because something terrible has happened. The song has a bit of a complex; the vibe of it is slightly off. There's this cyclical melody that is almost major, but there are intervals that are slightly outside of what you'd expect, and it's kind of mildly anxious. There's an energy to it — it's slightly dark, but it's also hopeful.

On "Micro-Aggressions," every 20 seconds there's something new to listen to. But there's one section with this blazing rock chord and some harmonized soloing. It sounded brilliant. Did you ever think of building a song from just that part?

REYES: No.

ABASI: We're maximalists. More is more.

REYES: It's like an artist working in front of his canvas. We can think of having the one part because that's what's going to be played live, but at the same time, we're just on this mentality of what the song needs. "Does it sound better with a harmony that maybe we can't play live?" In the end, it's about the recording.

Let's talk about the guitars you used on the album. Tosin, are you pretty much using your Abasi Concepts guitars?

ABASI: Yeah. I would say, except for maybe one solo, all my parts were tracked with my guitar.

REYES: There's a few solos on which we ended up using a Gibson.

ABASI: Oh yeah, the Les Paul.

REYES: Which is very random — there were sprinkles of it. It's kind of what we were talking about earlier — "What does the recording need?" In a perfect situation, we would have one guitar for the entire thing, but in the process of what's best for the mix, when we were in the studio, my buddy had a bunch of relic guitars. He pulled out a Les Paul, we hooked it up, and it sounded great.

Javier, how about you? Did you mainly use your ESPs?

REYES: No. All the rhythm stuff is with Tosin's guitar. Again, it's more of a utilitarian process. "Does the song need this or that, or are we going to add more difficulty by including another guitar and tone and whatnot?"

By your own admission, you both push yourselves to make things complex. At the end of the day, though, do you ever just kick back and unwind by playing — oh, I don't know — something like "Taking Care of Business"?

REYES: No. [*Laughs*]

ABASI: I've been kind of getting into the blues, just like a fun...

REYES: By blues, he means Eric Gales.

ABASI: Yeah, Eric Gales and Joe Bonamassa and Josh Smith. But obviously, look, if I'm playing a type of music that has three chords, and each chord gets an equal number of beats, and those beats make up an even measure, I'm playing something a lot simpler than Animals As Leaders. That's a different type of muscle, and it's relaxing because there's parts of my brain that aren't counting complex time signatures. You get to express yourself in a different way. For me, maybe playing classical guitar is how I unwind and play something that is just a different energy. GW

"I THINK THERE'S SOME CONCERN WITH FINDING [A PRODUCER] WHO CAN UNDERSTAND WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE GUITAR AND DRUM PARTS"
— JAVIER REYES

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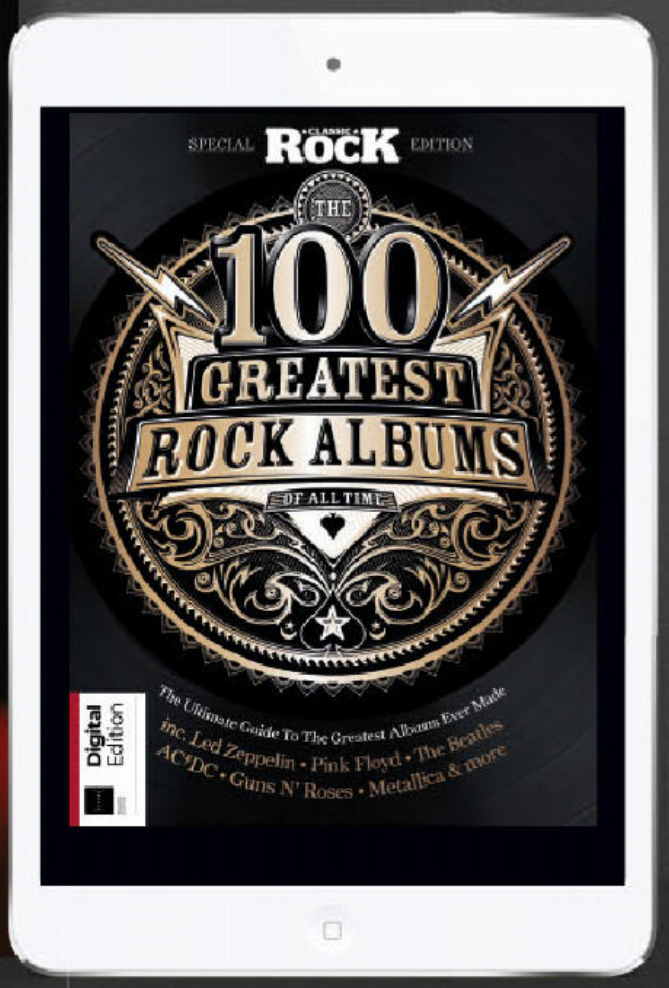

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Joe Satriani with his Ibanez JS Y2KPLT Crystal Planet Limited Edition

INTERGALACTIC SATCH

SUPREME SHREDDER **JOE SATRIANI** CHALLENGED HIMSELF TO CREATE A "NEW STANDARD" FOR INSTRUMENTAL GUITAR ALBUMS TO BE MEASURED AGAINST. THE RESULT? *THE ELEPHANTS OF MARS*, AN UNDENIABLY CINEMATIC NEW ALBUM RECORDED WITHOUT CREATIVE BARRIERS — OR PHYSICAL AMPLIFIERS BY JIM BEAUGEZ | PHOTOS BY JEN ROSENSTEIN

IT MUST BE DIFFICULT TO WATCH AN ALBUM YOU labored over for months get released into a world on lockdown. But in April 2020, Joe Satriani made the decision to put out his 18th solo album, *Shapeshifting*, a month into the Covid pandemic in hopes the world would be back to business as usual in a matter of months, and he could play it live for fans around the world on tour.

30
JOE SATRIANI
TOSIN ABASI & JAVIER REYES
DONNA GRANTIS
NICK JOHNSTON
STEVE VAI
GUTHRIE GOVAN
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GREG HOWE
PAT METHENY
RORY FRIERS & NIALL KENNEDY
ANGEL VIVALDI
JASON BECKER
MARCOS MENA
JOHN McLAUGHLIN
JEFF BECK

As those optimistic early days of the pandemic passed, Satch settled into longer-range plans. Excited by the band he had assembled — Kenny Aronoff on drums, Bryan Beller on bass and newcomer Rai Thistlethwayte on keys — he decided to record some new songs to supplement *Shapeshifting* before they hit the road. But, alas, plans shifted again, and instead he conceived an entirely new album, *The Elephants of Mars*.

"I was really energized to come up with a new angle, so I spent a lot of time talking with Eric [*Caudieux, producer and longtime collaborator*] about how we could break down some of the barriers that were always up," Satriani says. "Let's say you walk into the studio and you go, 'I want to make a blues record,' or whatever it might be. When you make up your mind about that, you eliminate possibilities and pathways for expression because you've got to focus. So coming up with these concepts about what we were going to allow ourselves to do really opened up this wonderful sort of tidal wave of creativity between us."

The Elephants of Mars opens with a backward-guitar intro that leads into "Sahara," built on a relentless rhythm with a series of hypnotic half-bends played on an Ibanez AR3212 12-string electric to mount the tension. During the song's percussive breakdown, Satriani rips a David Gilmour-inspired solo, then steps on a Dunlop JHW2 Jimi Hendrix Signature '69 Psych Octavio Fuzz pedal to push his fretwork into hyperdrive.

The cinematic musical landscapes Satriani creates throughout the album turn on a dime, like how the pulsing main riff of "Sailing the Seas of Ganymede" segues into noise-guitar breaks. The wild, industrial title track is a dark ride through a Gotham-esque nightscape that opens into dreamy interlude and culminates in a psychedelic guitar freakout. And the acoustic-based, Eastern-leaning "Doors of Perception" gives the album another of its many unpredictable moments, played on his signature Ibanez JSA20 and an electric sitar.

But *The Elephants of Mars* also stands apart in his four-decade career as the first album recorded at his home — or, several homes, technically. Satriani collaborated with Caudieux and his band by tracking on his Ibanez JS guitars and sending the audio files back and forth without ever being in the same room with his producer or the other musicians. The songs ended up changing directions multiple times based on the artists' spontaneity.

"There wasn't a time clock," he says. "We weren't showing up at a studio for 10 days to get all the basics and then three weeks to finish all the overdubs. That's the way I've made albums for decades and that's really stressful, and when

Satch with an Ibanez “Gold Boy” prototype

you've got 45 minutes to do a banjo part, you've got 45 minutes, and that's it."

The Elephants of Mars proves that Satriani's recent non-musical forays, such as his *Crystal Planet* comic book series, a collaboration with Ned Evett, also serve Satch the guitarist, recharging his creative well and expanding his adventurous musical palette. Satriani called *Guitar World* to talk about creating his new album amid unprecedented times.

The Elephants of Mars saga began with your plan to make two records: an instrumental album and one with vocals. What made you change course?

The timing of everything. In January 2020, I had a new album ready to come out [Shapeshifting]. I had just done a video for the song "Nineteen Eighty" [*transcribed in the November 2020* GW]. I was doing some press down in L.A., the NAMM Show, that kind of stuff. I think the last thing I did on stage was join Steve [*Vai*] at one of his NAMM performances. Then I got back to San Francisco and everything shut down. And I started thinking, if there's going to be this big lag, six months before we show up on stage with this new album, maybe we could take advantage of that off time to create some music that would showcase the band. And then as we finally do get back on the road, maybe we give these away, like free albums that are supplementary to *Shapeshifting*.

It all seemed like a fun idea. The newest member in this circle was Australian Rai Thistlethwayte, who's an amazing musician — a keyboard player, guitar player, singer — and I really wanted to give him some room to do what he can do as a frontman and a singer. We decided, "Well, let's do a sprawling instrumental record where everybody gets to solo like crazy, and then a sprawling vocal record where we'll just have fun with our roots." Because we weren't aiming for hit singles or something like that; we were actually just introducing ourselves as a new band to the audience.

That dragged on, unfortunately, so all of a sudden it's like, "Oh, all right. We'll do it in '21." And then that started to look really bad. I realized so much time, emotionally, has gone by for the public that people are going to expect just a new album. They're not thinking of a supplemental series of releases to support a record that was [*released*] at the beginning of the pandemic. We had to rethink the whole idea. I called the guys and I said, "Look, change of plans. We'll forget about the vocal record, and I'm going to start working on the concept of a new instrumental release."

You were interested in creating a new standard in instrumental guitar music. What was your vision?

There are people writing and playing and practicing and performing in front of a phone for a 15-second moment of wow. That's not Jimi Hendrix or Miles Davis. I don't know what that is, to a certain extent. On the negative side, it's just some kind of weird form of musical cotton candy, but on the positive side, some of the absolute, most amazing guitar players have risen to the occasion and have figured out how to wow you in those few moments just playing in front of a camera. I mean, even the sound is completely discounted now, like, who cares if you're hearing the electric guitar acoustically as well as hearing it in whatever amp or modeling thing is happening in the background? Nobody cares.

However, I have to say I love it, and there's got to be 100 guitar players out there [*who*] I love watching every day because they do things I could never do. I just think it's amazing that they've done it, and that they're actually moving the art of guitar forward, but in a very strange way compared to what was around five years ago. And in the same way, I think that TV and MTV, as you go backwards in the decades, you see how each new leap forward in technological media has changed the way musicians get ahead in life. That had a lot to do with my thought process. I thought, I just want to remove certain things that some people may think is a requirement for an instrumental album, and I want to focus on things I think are really interesting to explore.

It's not just about, "Look, I figured out how I can play higher up the neck." That's really not what interests me, anyway. But there is a whole group of players out there who've taken that challenge upon themselves and they're excelling to fantastic heights. So I wanted to bring something else that I thought was missing, which is to deliver something deeper. That's what a person in my position should be doing.

Were there specific creative elements you singled out to pursue in doing that?

This album was different because I was doing all the guitar at home. It was a different kind of a record to put together logistically, and that really helped because there was no rush. We would send stuff to each other via email and we'd get stuff back without speaking to each other and we'd sit there and just listen to it, and it wouldn't be any on-the-spot judgment that was necessary. There were great accidents that happened along the way. And I have to say everybody maintained this level of spontaneity that you'd think would never happen if there was all this time and everybody was by themselves. But in fact, everyone kind of got the idea that they needed to record really spontaneous, interesting performances. And it was not about charting everything out the way that the arrangers or the artist demanded.

"THERE ARE PEOPLE WRITING AND PLAYING AND PRACTICING AND PERFORMING IN FRONT OF A PHONE FOR A 15-SECOND MOMENT OF WOW. THAT'S NOT JIMI HENDRIX OR MILES DAVIS"

I was going to ask how you broke out of your conventional methods of working, but it sounds like the entire thing was unconventional.

Yeah. It's interesting that, let's say if we go back to *Shapeshifting*, that was pretty conventional. In fact, it was kind of retro for me because we had 10 days for basics and two or three weeks for overdubs, and we recorded in a warehouse, Jim Scott's studio. I think that showing up with 100 guitars and 20 amps, that kind of thing, I've done that so many times.

In this case, though, I started to think, I don't know when we're going to get in

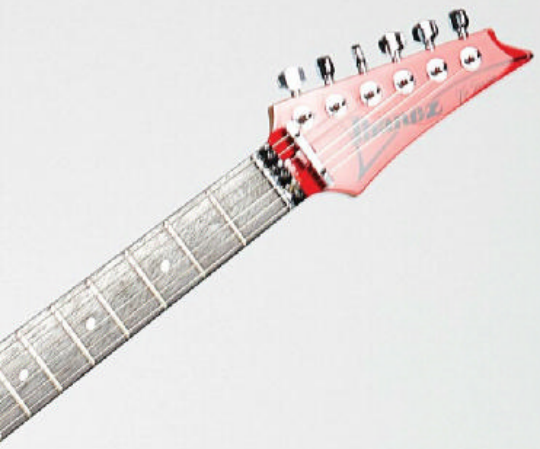
the studio to finish this album, so I'll do what I've done for the last 15, 20 years, which is make sure I also record everything direct so that we can re-amp it later. This time around, I did what I've been doing with demos. I just took my guitar, whatever was the one that was my favorite [*at the moment*], and I went into my Millennia Media HV-37 mic pre and went right into Pro Tools and I just recorded DI, so everything was DI and I would monitor using Amplitube or whatever was fun at the moment, because I kept thinking this is going to be re-amped at some point. Little did I know that it wasn't. Somewhere along the line I realized I'm not going to get into a studio. This record is going to be done all at home. Everybody's home.

And so I started that process of re-amping at home, and the strangest thing happened, which was I kept going back to SansAmp. What I noticed was that the plugin had a way of allowing me to be really dynamic in this particular situation where you're in a studio by yourself and you're playing to tracks people have been sending you. I just found it so uniquely pliable and it was very attentive to every little thing I was doing. I thought, okay, this is kind of interesting. I don't know how it'll pan out, but I'm not going to plant the flag about using this until we get Kenny on the drums, because it's all about the drums. You don't really know the size of your recording until you get your drum performance down and the bass is added. In the end, the SansAmp just seemed to work with these tracks, and probably it's because I was listening to it as I was performing, and I was reacting to it. So that magic, that synergy, got on tape.

You didn't use physical amps on the record at all?

None. But we really do have to discuss what Greg Koller did during the mixing. Greg was our main mix and mastering engineer, and he and Eric mixed the record. I was unable to attend any of the sessions, so I was just getting them every night and we would play around with different ideas. But Greg was working out of Jon Brion's studio. Jon was very gracious in letting us use the studio for mixing, and in Jon's studio is some of the greatest outboard gear from the last 80 years of recording. I was told that a lot of my guitar, if not all of it, would eventually make its way through Les Paul's own personal [*Universal Audio limiter*] 1176 and lots of other gear that Jon had acquired through different estate auctions. He really was able to take what was down there on the hard drives via SansAmp and he was

Satch with his Ibanez JS2480 in Muscle Car Red



"THERE'S GOT TO BE 100 GUITAR PLAYERS OUT THERE WHO I LOVE WATCHING EVERY DAY BECAUSE THEY DO THINGS I COULD NEVER DO"

able to just really maximize his potential through his own wizardry.

Had you done virtual or modeled amps to that extent before on a record?

Yes and no. Going back to 1999, Eric and I did a record in his living room, *Engines of Creation*. We didn't use speakers, but we had about 10 amplifier heads and a Palmer speaker simulator. And there were a couple of things we did where there was a SansAmp — I think that was the only plugin at the time that was worth using — and we would combine it.

When I was working with Andy Johns on *The Extremist* and then on Chickenfoot's first album, it was so traditional. It was stacks of amps and you turn them on 10 and you leave the room and you record layers, and you always combine Les Paul and Telecaster with your Ibanez and you always put a 12-string here and Nashville tuning there. So when I would get a chance to not do that, I would go, "Yeah, I'm excited. Let's not do that." I think that's the most shocking thing when I just sat here and I was writing up the equipment list and I thought, oh my God, there's one entry: SansAmp.

Were there any new ways that you approached writing your guitar parts?

If I'm in a particular kind of mood, I just reach into the musical toolbox and say, "Well, this is what's going to make this mood happen. It's going to make it real. It's going to make it palpable for the listener eventually." And I never really know what it's going to be. I mean so much of the music was very reactionary to a mood. And although some of it was written and performed really fast, other stuff took months of reflection before that aha moment would arrive and then all of a sudden you'd record something in three minutes.

Take the song "Sahara." That was a vocal song I wrote for Rai, lyrics and everything, and then it just didn't happen. It wound up on the Do Not Do pile, and then months later it was suggested by Eric that perhaps I revisit it and see if there's a way to make it an instrumental. And it's very different [*now*]. Instrumentals have their own requirements for melodic development. When you remove the lyrics, you're left with just the repetition of the notes, and so it doesn't really work. You can't just do an instrumental version. You have to rewrite it.

The title track has a lot of opposing moods. What was the thought behind that song and how the parts developed?

Some of the songs have this history that's crazy. [*"The Elephants of Mars"*] got its start as I was taking breaks from different albums over the last seven, eight years, and I would write musical cues for what we would hope would be the *Crystal Planet* animated TV series. I just started creating these short versions of ideas and I'd send them to Ned. There was one that I just kept falling in love with, and it was a very retro-Nine Inch Nails kind of thing, but it had this clean guitar solo to it. And the funny thing was that it had this weird, elephant sort of robotic, monster sound. As I would listen to these things over and over, I would start to think more cinematically and story-wise, as Ned and I were always developing different stories. The idea about these elephants being real started to be something I wanted to somehow figure out.

This piece of music winds up with Eric, and he took this second part where there's this really clean guitar solo, and he just got rid of all the music underneath the guitar solo and he rewrote all the chords, and he went to halftime, the total breakdown section. Once I heard what he had done with the breakdown, I was really inspired to create more of a rock 'n' roll guitar freakout, but still keeping in mind the "elephants from Mars" kind of thing. The whole thing crystallized pretty quickly once that final guitar solo was put on there.

Cinematic is probably a word that gets overused, but it makes sense here considering that you were doing all those cues and thinking more in a visual sense.

It's interesting how some of these pieces got their start a really long time ago, and then, there are pieces like "Doors of Perception" that were written very close to finishing the album. And perhaps you spend three days working on something where it's got like six electric guitars and then one day you go, "I've got to pick up an acoustic because I just don't want to hear high-gain guitar anymore."

Here's a funny story about how weird things get. So, "Sailing the Seas of Ganymede," I had this piece for a couple of years and I was dying to get it on the last two albums. For some reason it never fit. And then this time around, it would seem perfect. And I added a couple of things to it and I sent it off to Rai and I was determined to get him soloing on as many songs as I could. And he sent it back, but he put his [*keyboard*] solo in the wrong place. But as soon as we heard it, we were like, "Well, that's the new right place." It didn't make any sense that somebody would solo there, but that's because I'd heard the song for too many years. Sometimes you just need somebody in the band to just do something that they're not supposed to do and it just kind of wakes you up. GW

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FREE FOR ALL

JAZZ/FUSION GREAT JOHN McLAUGHLIN

on his liberating new album, his recent run-in with the law
and his spiritual connection to pretty much everything and everyone

THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC has brought with it countless forms of hardship: from catastrophic to tedious and everything in between. It's affected the health, finances and emotional well-being of hundreds of millions of people across the globe. It's forced many of us to fundamentally change the way we worked, cared for families, shopped for food, went to school, socialized, created music and so much more. For John McLaughlin, pandemic-packed 2020 was also the year he got busted... for riding his bicycle.

The British guitar virtuoso weathered that year's turbulence in Monaco, where the 80-year-old has lived with his family for decades. When the jazz-fusion great wasn't practicing guitar, McLaughlin would combat his cabin fever by taking a spin on his bike. It was on one of these stress-reducing treks that he found himself on the wrong side of the law.

"During the first lockdown, you were allowed to go 1 kilometer from where you lived, and [*stay*] out for one hour," he says. "I was on my bike, and I ended up in France, because France surrounds Monaco. I was about 500 meters [*over the limit*] and I got fined. I had to pay 135 euros for 500 meters! [*Laughs*] That's terrible. So I tried to stay clean after that."

It's mid 2021 when McLaughlin recounts this story to *Guitar World*. He can laugh about it now, and he's also quick to acknowledge that a traffic ticket pales in comparison to the many tragedies people have experienced throughout the ongoing Covid pandemic. But that day when he got pulled over, he was irate — a feeling that only continued to grow as the stay-at-home orders dragged on and restrictions tightened throughout 2020.

His frustrations reached their "boiling point" in September. But instead of hopping on the bike, he picked up his custom PRS and "let it all come out in music." The benefits of these sessions were twofold: not only did they provide the catharsis he craved, but they also laid the groundwork for his latest full-length album, the aptly titled *Liberation Time*.

"Within the space of three weeks I had all the music," he says. "It burst out of me. Instead of anger it was music."

Social-distancing mandates forced McLaughlin to record the entire album remotely. It was a new experience for him — trading tracks online and figuring out how to create a free-spirited musical collaboration with players all across the world. Luckily, he chose an assortment of straight-up killers to help him in this effort. *Liberation Time*'s lineup includes McLaughlin's current ensemble 4th Dimension — Gary Husband (drums/piano), Etienne Mbappé (bass), Ranjit Barot (drums, Konokol vocals) — plus drummers Vinnie Colaiuta and Nicolas Viccaro, bassists Sam Burgess and Jerome Regard, pianists Oz Ezzeldin and Roger Rossignol, tenor saxophonist Julian Siegel and J.M. "Kiki" Aublette contributed on bass and drums.

"The audio files would come back, and I'd put the headphones on and listen to the guys playing and I wouldn't be separate from them," McLaughlin says. "The track 'Right Here, Right Now, Right On' — Oz Ezzeldin recorded that in Cairo. The drums were done in Paris. Saxophone was done in London. It's nuts! But I put the headphones on, and we were all together in the same room...

WORDS BY BRAD ANGLE | PHOTO BY ROSS HALFIN

30

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ANGEL VIVALDI
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MARCOS MENA
JOHN McLAUGHLIN
JEFF BECK

"Inspiration is a question of perception," says John McLaughlin. "And perception can be cultivated in meditation. This is why I bring the two together"

I was inspired and very lucky to have these great guys playing."

A key component to *Liberation Time*, as well as McLaughlin's approach to music and life in general, is communion with "The Spirit" — an expansive practice that allows him to experience the interconnection between, quite literally, everything in existence.

"For me, music is a form of meditation and self-discovery, especially if you're improvising," he says. "To know yourself... is an imperative in life for me... And that is what happens when you meditate. You discover nature and consciousness is one thing... any separation is an illusion. We're all connected beyond any question of a doubt. Everything and everyone... especially consciousness."

McLaughlin says he's been cultivating his spiritual practice since the Sixties and believes it has direct, practical applications when it comes to creating art and music. He's brought that open-minded, collaborative approach to many influential projects and notable sessions over his five-plus-decade career: from giving Jimmy Page guitar lessons and jamming with Jimi Hendrix to performing with Graham Bond Quartet, Miles Davis, Santana, Jaco Pastorius, Mahavishnu Orchestra, Chick Corea, Shakti and many more.

Liberation Time stands as a testament to the power of that spiritual connection — and to McLaughlin's still-stunning technical prowess and expressive six-string abilities. The guitarist's articulate single-note phrasing and fluent bursts of alternate-picked 16th notes shine throughout the album's songs, which range from jazz-inflected jams ("Right Here, Right Now, Right On") and exciting guitar/drum workouts ("Liberation Time") to soulful R&B/blues excursions ("Lockdown Blues") and high-flying, rhythmically tense compositions ("As the Spirit Sings"). The multi-instrumentalist McLaughlin even shows off his piano skills on a couple emotionally evocative interludes ("Mila Repa," "Shade of Blue").

In the wide-ranging interview below, McLaughlin opens up about the unique process of creating *Liberation Time*, how he maintains his prodigious guitar chops, the role spirituality plays in improvisation and much more.

The pandemic has turned the world on its head for the last year-plus. Has the guitar been a good outlet for you during all the uncertainty?
I play the guitar every day, two or three hours sometimes. Because it's very good for my mind, for my spirit and music just makes everything right.

Do you follow a specific guitar workout to keep your technique at such a high level?
No. Well, you could say yes... What I do is I warm up; then I'll say, "What do I want to be free on today?" At the moment, I'm [playing] a piece that we recorded a few years back called "Trancefusion" [*from 2012's* Now Here This], which has got tonality but you can drift out of it. [*It's in*] 4/4, but then it's got a long bridge that is in 9/4. It's got a more specific harmony. Sometimes I'll replay that eight or nine times, because I want to find more things inside myself relative to that piece. How can I move harmonic extensions in the 4/4 section while keeping the integrity? Not just playing out, because it's out. But where you move in an aesthetic way musically.

> "Now when it's time to solo ... What are you going to say? **... TO ME, THE ANSWER IS VERY SIMPLE**"

***Liberation Time*'s liner notes mention your "strong connection to the spirit." New guitar players are always looking for their "voice." Did seeking the spirit help you with this?**
Absolutely. [*But*] to find your voice... If you're not in it for the long term, don't bother. [*Laughs*] Because you never get to the end, young players! Believe me. [*Laughs*] The thing is, your question is kind of loaded. Because the minute you talk about The Spirit, you're talking about spiritual development: the development of the human person. If you don't know who you are, I think you're in a dream. Not that the dream is bad; dreams are great. But to know yourself is an imperative I discovered in the 1960s. I had no idea who I was, what this mystery of existence is in this unbelievably fathomless infinite universe. What am I doing? What is everybody doing?

Then you come back to playing... Jazz demands that you improvise over structure. You have to be able to articulate tempo, harmony and innate sense of melody in the improvisations. Now when it's time to solo... What are you going to say...? To me, the answer is very simple. The only thing we can say is the story of our life: how deeply do you feel about the music you're playing and the people you're playing with... And can you articulate the depth of that feeling with the notes and the harmony. It looks like an insurmountable problem. But it's not, thanks to inspiration. However, inspiration is a question of perception. And perception can be cultivated in meditation. This is why I bring the two together.

McLaughlin — with his trusty PRS Private Stock guitar — on stage at the Pierre Boulez Saal in Berlin, April 30, 2019

Earlier you mentioned striving for freedom in your playing. How difficult was it to get free with the other musicians when you weren't able to record with them in the same room?
I would send out the scores and the demos to all the musicians with simple instructions: listen to what I've done but take it and be yourself. Don't play it like I played it, unless it's what you want. Any improvisation, be totally yourself. I'm not interested in what you think I might like. I want you to be who you really are... So that gave them a lot of freedom.

Were there any tracks that you redid after hearing what the guys sent back?
I did a lot of pre-guitar work, of course, even improvisation, and the melodies and the

FRANK HOENSCH/REDFERNS

arrangements. However sometimes the file would come back from the players — and they were killing on it! [*Laughs*] I would have to redo my part because they took the character of it and developed it and provoked me to where I had to redo my part to be on [*their*] level... I had to redo "Lockdown Blues," "Singing Our Secrets," "Right Here, Right Now, Right On." They came back killing! I had to step up to the plate.

What gear did you use on *Liberation Time*?
I used my PRS [*custom-built Private Stock McCarty Violin guitar*] that Paul gave me years back. What a beauty. I just love it. I don't use basic amps anymore. I like the preamps... I've been using the Line 6 HX Stomp, the programmable preamp. That is a real beauty... I'm also a fan of the old Mesa/Boogie V-Twin [*tube preamp pedal*] and the Seymour Duncan Twin Tube Classic. And it's not on the album, but I also use the Zendrive II preamp. That's me, that's what I like.

I've gotta ask about that melodic guitar synth sound on "Singing Our Secrets"...
That's a Logic-basic sound that I've been tweaking for 20 years. But it's not triggered through a regular MIDI device... It's a simple thing called Migic. It's an app that costs you about $49 or something and it's really quite phenomenal. It's only mono. You have to tweak it to the point where the input and the triggering sensitivity correspond to your playing... If you want to go synth, I recommend it.

Do you plan to bring *Liberation Time* to live stages after the pandemic restrictions lift?
Oh yeah... Can you get me a gig, man? [*Laughs*]

[*Laughs*] Well, I'm in Brooklyn. I know you had your final U.S. tour a while ago. Do you think you'll play the States again?
I don't know, it's really hard to say. My whole musical world has been in complete chaos in terms of touring, because there just isn't any this year... But I shouldn't be complaining because there are hundreds of millions of people in dire straits, musicians too. So I don't know. And at my tender age, we'll just have to see what the gods have in store for me. GW

OVERLOOKED, UNDERRATED, SIDELINED AND DOWNPLAYED SIXTIES GUITAR HEROES PART 5: EDDIE PHILLIPS

THE BOWMAN COMETH

AN ODE TO EDDIE PHILLIPS OF THE CREATION. BY ALAN DI PERNA

IN 1989, I SAT WITH LEGENDARY BRITISH INVASION record producer Shel Talmy in his Hollywood Hills home. We were talking about all the iconic acts he'd worked with in the mid to late Sixties, from the Who and the Kinks to David Bowie. The conversation invariably turned to another great band from that era — one, sadly, not as well known today — the Creation, and their explosive, wildly innovative guitarist, Eddie Phillips.

"Had that band stayed together," Talmy declared, "I'm convinced Eddie Phillips would be in the same category as Eric Clapton and all those people."

The Creation were always the quintessential cult band, not to mention one of rock's great guitar bands. The iconic Eighties-Nineties dream pop/Brit pop label Creation Records — home to My Bloody Valentine, Oasis, the Jesus and Mary Chain, Swervedriver and other game-changing guitar groups — was named in their honor. Devoted fans include everyone from John Lydon to film director Wes Anderson, who put the Creation song "Making Time" in his 1998 feature film, *Rushmore*.

BIPS/GETTY IMAGES

The Creation perform "Making Time" on *Ready Steady Go!* in 1966; [*from left*] Eddie Phillips, Jack Jones, Kenny Pickett and Tony Cooke

"Eddie absolutely invented it. I got it on a record before Jimmy Page ever used it"

SHEL TALMY

The hipsters all know, but the mainstream never quite understood. Even in their mid- to late-Sixties heyday, the Creation barely hovered below the top 10 in their own land, the U.K. As an American teenager in the Sixties, I only discovered them because Pete Townshend would sometimes namecheck them in interviews with the rock press. They were virtually unknown in America.

As guitarists and songwriters, Phillips and Townshend were very much kindred spirits. Both were using ideas from mid-Sixties mod culture and cutting-edge art movements like Pop and Auto-Destruction to expand the horizons of live rock performance. And a big part of that was expanding the electric guitar's sonic horizons through the use of feedback and aggressive playing techniques. Phillips discovered that taking a violin bow to highly amplified electric guitar strings satisfied both requirements very nicely. Phillips inspired Jimmy Page's own use of a violin bow a few years later. Talmy, who worked extensively with both guitarists confirmed this when I spoke with him in '89.

"Of course Eddie Philips is the first-ever guitarist to use a violin bow on a guitar," he said. "Which is where Jimmy Page got it. Eddie absolutely invented it. I got it on a record before Jimmy Page ever used it."

That record was the aforementioned "Making Time," the Creation's hard-driving, feedback-drenched summer of '66 debut disc. In the chaotic solo section, Phillips' bowed Gibson ES-335 crackles and moans like some otherworldly menace. Phillips had developed the bow technique in an earlier group, the Mark IV, initially using a hacksaw with a guitar string in place of the saw's blade. But when that put three ugly gashes on Phillips' then-brand-new Gibson ES-335, he decided to settle for more conventional instrumentation — a violin bow.

That 335 was Phillips' main guitar throughout the Creation's mid-Sixties career. The instrument's semi-hollow body no doubt played a huge role in Phillips' throaty feedback timbres, especially when combined with one of the early Marshall 8x10 cabinets and an early 200W Marshall head. Phillips was employing feedback as early as the Mark IV's 1965 single "I'm Leaving."

"I was able to play the whole solo with feedback," he later recalled. "I remember one of the engineers stopped the session, because they thought something had gone wrong, but I had to tell him that's the way it was supposed to sound."

"With the feedback came the violin bow idea," Phillips told interviewer Chris Hunt, "just to get something out of the guitar that no one had ever heard before — something that was against the rules!"

Phillips' initial idea was to use the bow to create open-string drones. "I thought maybe I could get a thing that would make the bottom E play while I can hammer on notes on the top E," he said. But he was soon able to move beyond that, using the bow to create melodies.

In general, Phillips' approach to feedback tended to be more melodic than Townshend's — one thing that distinguishes these two great originators of the feedback-frenzied approach to electric guitar playing that Jimi Hendrix and others would soon embrace. This melodicism clearly anticipated Hendrix's own use of feedback.

"It could be used musically," Phillips said, regarding feedback, "and you could make a note of it; you could make it move. It's strange, because at that time there were a few people who more or less got into that way of thinking and playing at the same time — like Pete Townshend and others as well."

Much like the Who, the Creation were also exploring ways to end their live performances in some edgy, confrontational, Auto-Destructionist, smoke-bombs-and-mayhem kind of way. To help promote their October 1966 single "Painter Man," the Creation began climaxing their live sets with a cataclysmic performance of that song, during which lead singer Kenny Pickett would create an action painting on stage, wildly spraying paint from aerosol cans onto a large canvas while Phillips unleashed what he later described as a "violin bow freakout sort of thing."

As practiced by celebrated painters such as Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning and Grace Hartigan, action painting had long been part of the mid-century fine arts scene. But it was something entirely new and exciting in mid-Sixties pop musical performances.

"To my knowledge, the Creation were the first people to ever do an action painting onstage," Talmy told me. "Kenny Pickett also came from art school, like Pete Townshend. It's interesting how so many of those guys did. In fact, there was a big incident in Germany, in a very big hall that held about six to eight thousand people. He did an action painting with spray cans and he set fire to the damned thing and almost burned the theater down. He certainly got publicity! They were the first to do that, that I know of. And a lot of people copied it."

"We had this lunatic of a road manager creating smoke from behind the picture," Phillips himself further explained. "And then it snowballed. We thought: 'Perhaps we'd better set light to the picture when we'd finished with it.' 'Painter Man' was usually our last number and Ken used to rave about, painting this picture, which was then soaked in cellulose paint — which is quite flammable — and then a nutty roadie would put a match to it and the whole thing would go up in flames. The caretakers used to rush on with fire extinguishers. It was pretty dramatic... quite fun!"

Over a year later, Hendrix would light his guitar on fire at the Monterey Pop Festival, but that was a minor conflagration compared to the kind of pyro-psycho drama with which the Creation would routinely close their performances. It wasn't until the early Eighties that industrial music pioneers Einsturzende Neubauten would start lighting stages on fire. Maybe there's an influence there. Germany was the one major territory where the Creation were really big.

Their use of aerosol paint cans also anticipated the emergence of graffiti art by a couple of decades. And there's a conceptual angle to the Creation's fiery feedback freakouts that out art-schooled even Townshend. Creating a work of visual art and then destroying it in one dynamic action painting was something right out of the Auto-Destructionist playbook.

"I think the Who were actually influenced somewhat by the Creation," Talmy told me. "I think a lot of people were influenced by them. They were a very, very innovative, good band. And fun guys, by the way — really bright and fun to be with."

In addition to the fire, frenzy and feedback, the Creation were also projecting films onto the canvases that Pickett would create on stage. Pink Floyd, of course, were also using film projections during their performances at London's UFO club in early 1967. And because groups like Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin became major stadium acts and album rock radio staples in the Seventies and beyond, history is often written in such a way that innovations like bowed guitar or the onstage use of film were solely the invention of these blockbuster groups.

Actually, these innovations and others were more the product of a zeitgeist — ideas that were in the air in London during that fertile mid-Sixties period when mod morphed into psychedelia. The Move — the group that would eventually turn into ELO — were smashing television sets on stage at the time. "Smashing" was a common adjective for something really exciting and cool,

as evidenced by the title of the 1967 Swinging London movie, *Smashing Time*. The Creation were a key catalyst in the crystallization of this highly creative cultural moment — one of the foundations for what would eventually be called classic rock.

Of course, none of this would mean much if the Creation's music weren't so great. Between 1966 and '68 they produced a string of singles that were both hard-hitting and gloriously melodic. These include primordial power pop gems like the Who-ish "Biff Bang Pow," the proto-psychedelic "How Does It Feel" and the barely controlled six-string fury of "Tom Tom." As co-writer of the band's material, Eddie Phillips also looms large. He wrote the Creation's earlier songs with Kenny Pickett and the later material with Pickett's replacement, Bob Garner, who had earlier been the band's bassist. The Spinal Tap volatility of the Creation's lineup and the animosities behind the frequent personnel shifts certainly didn't help the band's career.

"They hated each other," Talmy told me. "I tried everything to keep them together and they just would not do it." Having signed the group to his own Planet Records label, Talmy had a vested interest in keeping them going. "When they broke up, I had a Number One with them in Germany, Holland and a couple of other countries," he recalled. "It was in the Top 20 in the British charts and I had just made a very big deal with them for America. But I just could not hold them together."

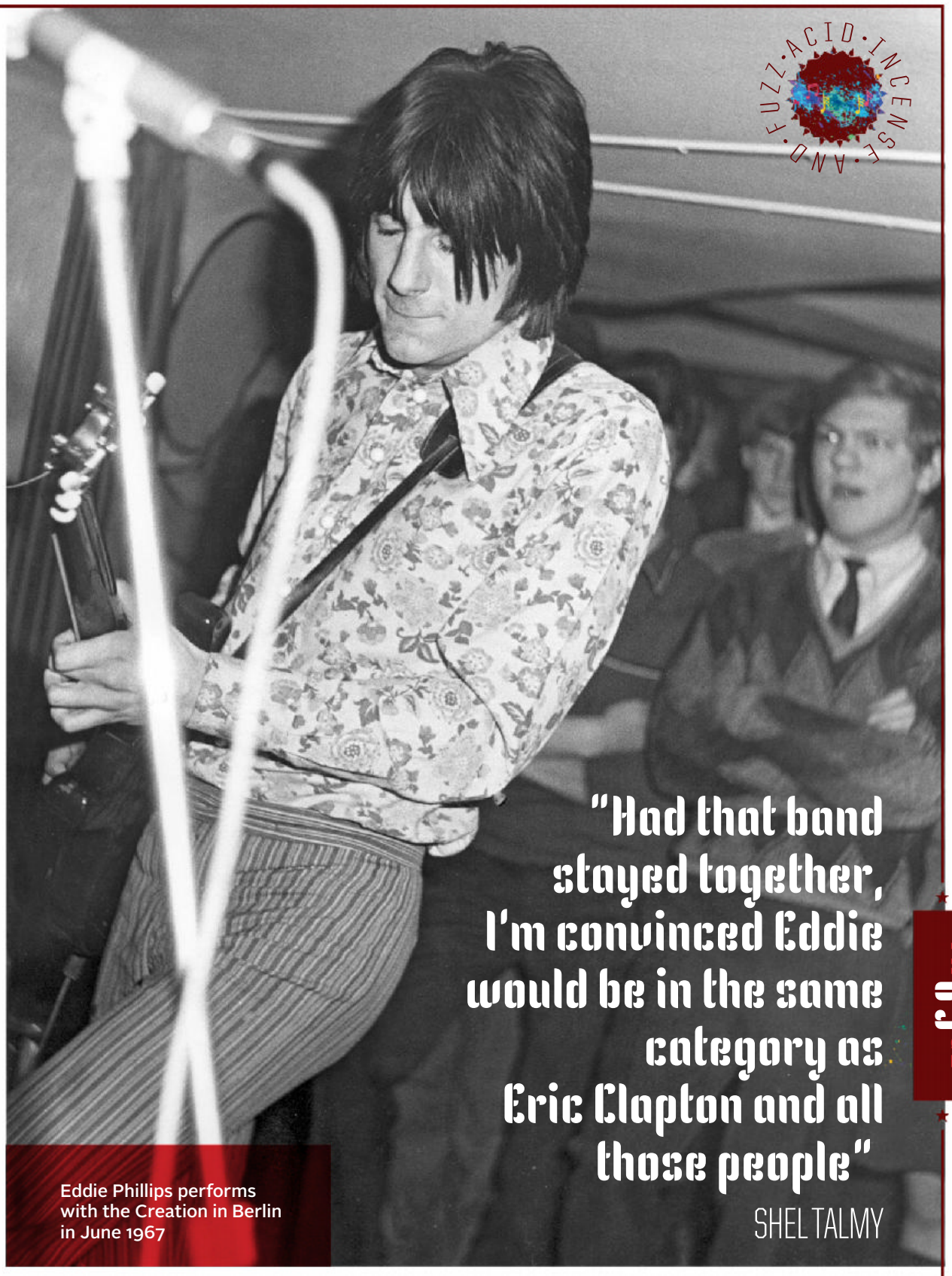
Like a highly volatile chemical compound, the Creation were simply too explosive to remain stable for very long. And they were just too much for a lot of people at the time — a period when the Kinks and the Rolling Stones were both banned from live performance in the United States, and the Who didn't make it over here until two years into their career, in 1967. Like the Who, the Creation were punk before they had a name for it — only perhaps even more so.

"With the rawness of the music and, above all, with our attitude to music, we could have been the first punks," Phillips once said. "It was our attitude to the music business. We really hated the business side of it."

This is an outlook that's rarely conducive to career longevity. Phillips exited the Creation in late 1967. In a revamped 1968 lineup, his replacement was Ron Wood, on hiatus from his stint as bassist in the Jeff Beck Group and, of course, destined to become a Rolling Stone. This is another way in which the Creation are important. They stand at a crossroads of British pop music genealogy in the Sixties. Bassist John Dalton was a member of the Creation before going on to join the Kinks. Longtime Kinks drummer Mick Avory played in one of the Creation reunion lineups. Scratch the surface of pop music history in this period and you're likely to find the Creation. One of their temporary drummers, Dave Preston, possibly preceded Keith Moon in falling drunk off a drum stool.

After leaving the Creation, Phillips went on to play with soul singer P.P. Arnold (Patricia Ann Cole). He reunited with Talmy for a Seventies single, "Limbo Jimbo," and reconciled with Pickett for a mid-Nineties Creation reunion that ended with Pickett's death in 1996. But there were lean years as well, and Phillips worked as a bus driver at one point. Along the way his Gibson ES-335 was stolen and eventually surfaced in the collection of XTC guitarist Dave Gregory — who, coincidentally also worked as a driver (albeit of trucks, not buses) after leaving that group. When the provenance of the instrument became known, Gregory restored it to Phillips, who, to this day, continues to lead the occasional Creation revival lineup.

Over the years, bowed guitar has been taken up by numerous high-profile players, ranging from Steve Vai and Mike McCready to Jonny Greenwood of Radiohead, Jon Por Birgisson of Sigur Ros and Lee Ranaldo of Sonic Youth. Many others employ electro-magnetic bowing devices such as the E-Bow. In this regard, we are all indebted to Eddie Phillips. GW

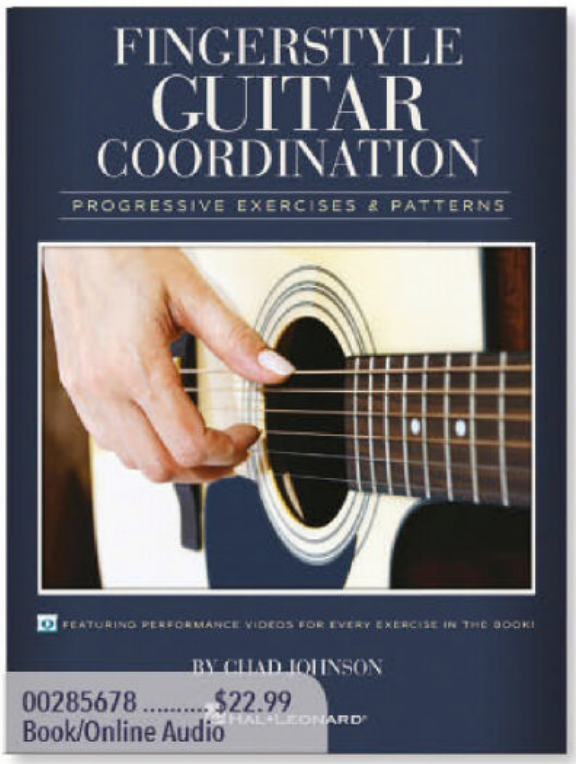


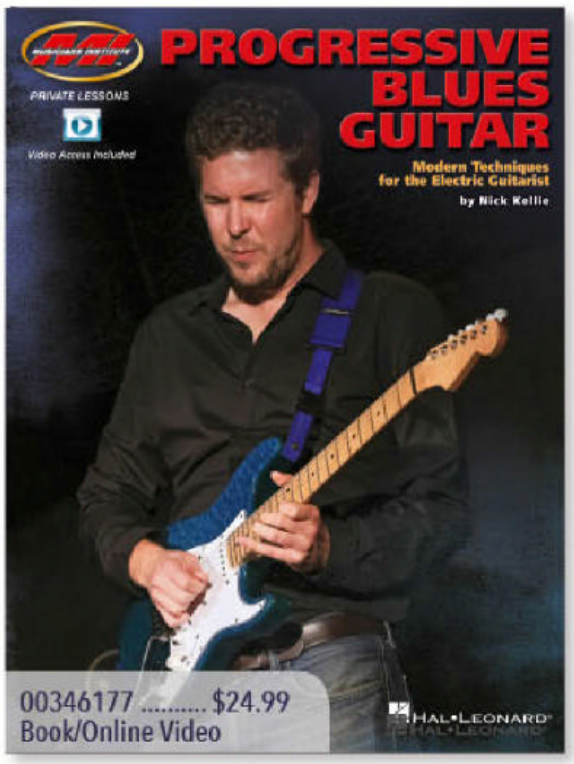
"Had that band stayed together, I'm convinced Eddie would be in the same category as Eric Clapton and all those people"
SHEL TALMY

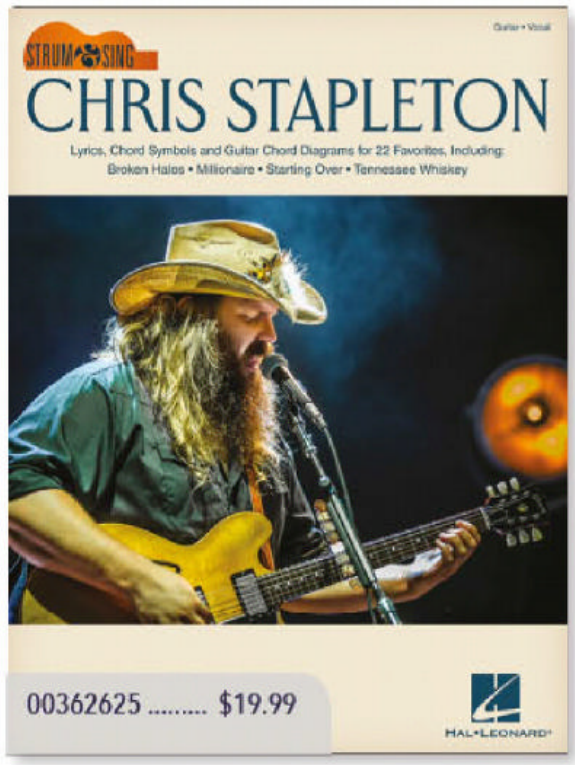
Eddie Phillips performs with the Creation in Berlin in June 1967

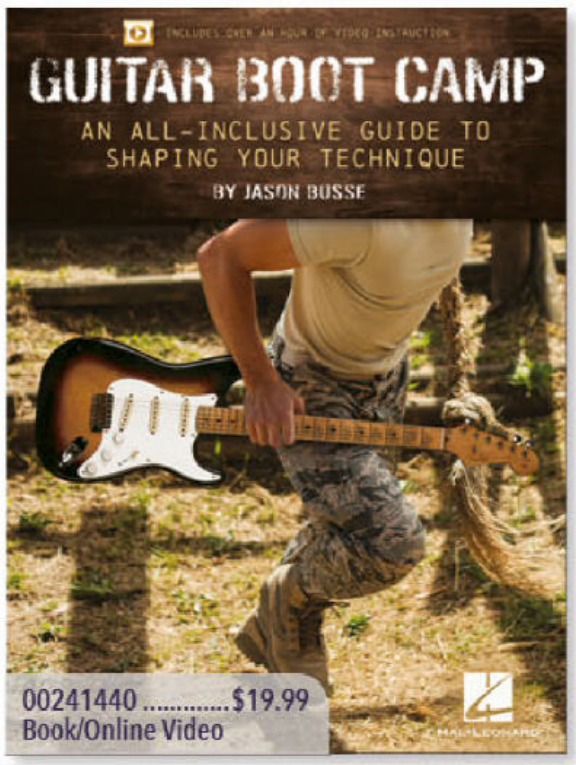
ARTCO-BERLIN/ULLSTEIN BILD VIA GETTY IMAGES

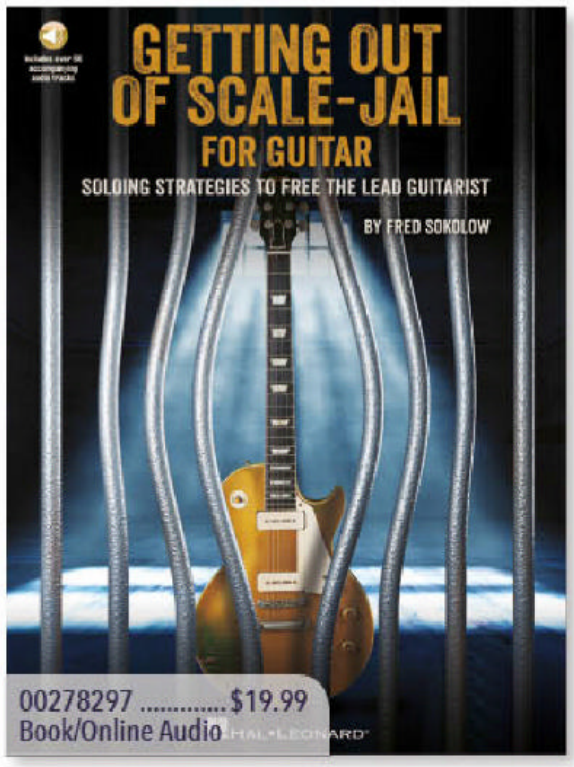
HOT GUITAR BOOKS FROM HAL LEONARD

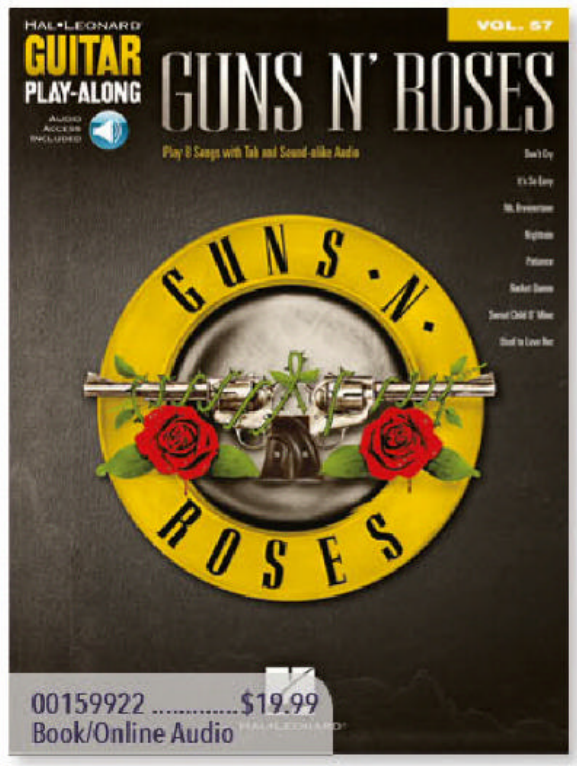


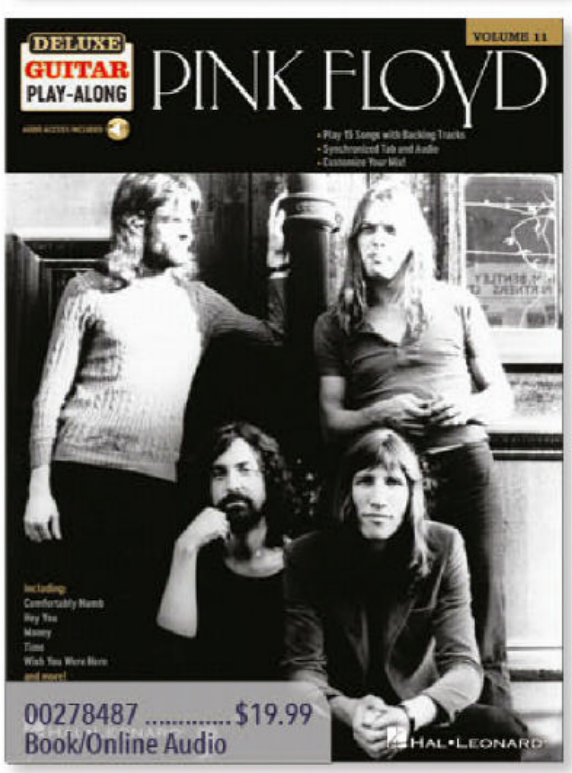


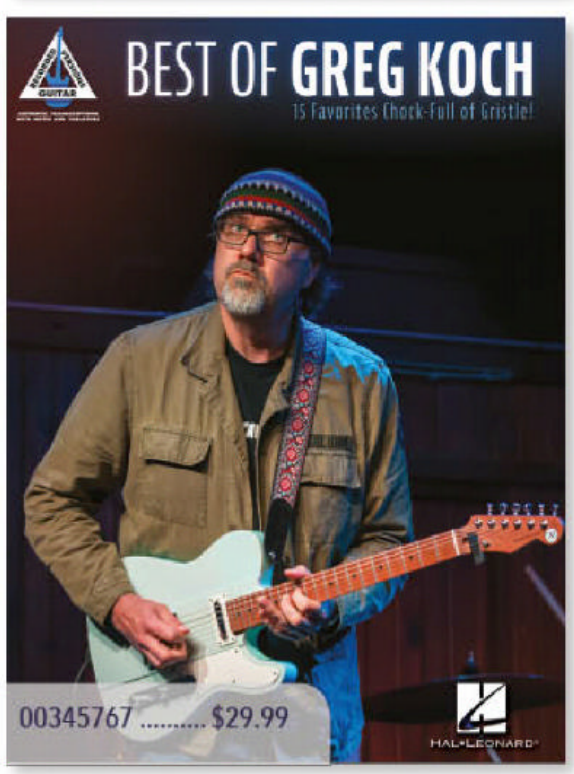


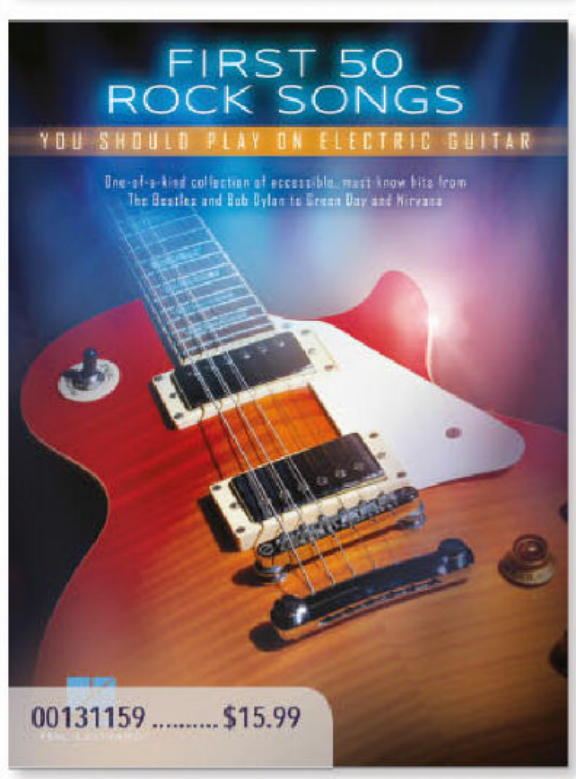












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SECOND LIFE

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE NEW **LINE 6 DL4 MkII** By Chris Gill

AT FIRST GLANCE, THE **NEW Line 6 DL4 MkII** doesn't seem much different from the original DL4. The overall dimensions are smaller and the housing is more simplified and streamlined, but the front panel still has six knobs and four footswitches. The pedal's operation is still as simple and straightforward as it's always been, but the engine under the hood has undergone significant upgrades. The rotary effect selector switch still has 16 positions, but a new Alt/Legacy button provides access to three banks of effects: 15 new MkII delay models, 15 original DL4 delay models (with Rhythmic Delay replaced by the Echo Pro's Echo Platter Binson Echo-Rec model) and 15 "secret" reverb models. The MkII models add several new Line 6 original models plus a TC Electronic 2290 ducking delay, a new Maestro EP-3 Echoplex model with enhanced tape saturation, a Roland RE-201 Space Echo and a modded Boss DM-2 model with increased delay time. The effect selector switch's six o'clock position engages the looper no matter which bank is selected. While the five control knobs are essentially the same, the Delay Time knob now also allows users to select note subdivision values when the Alt/Legacy button is held down.

The DL4 MkII's rear panel provides several significant upgrades, including MIDI In and Out/Thru jacks and an XLR Mic input with level control. There's also a slot for a microSD card for expanding the Looper's recording time and saving a recorded loop, and a USB C jack for connecting the pedal to a Mac or Windows computer.

The DL4 MkII's expanded internal memory allows the Looper to record 240 seconds in mono/120 seconds in stereo and provides 128 customizable preset locations. Bypass options now include true analog bypass, buffered bypass, DSP bypass (for natural decaying delay trails) and dry kill.

By combining all of the beloved sounds and ease of operation of the original unit with a new selection of delay and reverb models, expanded preset memory and looper recording times and a smaller overall footprint, the Line 6 DL4 MkII is destined to enjoy the same long-lived classic status as the original DL4.

THE LINE 6 **DL4** LIVES ON VIA THE NEW **DL4 MKII** DELAY MODELER, WHICH PROVIDES ALL THE MODELS AND FEATURES OF ITS PREDECESSOR, PLUS A WHOLE LOT MORE

An original Line 6 DL4 [*above*], surrounded by the new DL4 MkII

THE REAL DL

PRODUCED CONTINUOUSLY FOR 23 YEARS, THE **LINE 6 DL4** ENJOYS STATUS AS A CLASSIC OF THE DIGITAL MODELING ERA. By Chris Gill

STARTING DURING THE EARLY YEARS OF the new millennium, the development of digital modeling products became the music industry equivalent of the nuclear arms race. Only a few months after the latest and greatest new digital modeling product hit the market, a competing company would introduce something that offered a bigger selection of models with better detail and realism, faster processing and more memory, and often at a cheaper price, too. As a result, most digital modeling products only lasted about a year or two before being discontinued as companies continuously developed upgrades to remain competitive.

The Line 6 DL4 Delay Modeler is one of only a few exceptions to this state of affairs. Introduced in 1999 along with the MM4 Modulation Modeler, the DL4 dates back to when digital modeling technology was still in its infancy. While the MM4 was eventually discontinued, the DL4 has remained in continuous production until this year. However, the DL4 still lives on via the newly announced Line 6 DL4 MkII Delay Modeler, which provides all of the models and features of its predecessor plus a whole lot more.

The reasons Line 6's Modeler pedals were so long-lived is mainly due to how the company was able to make digital modeling accessible to the masses both through ease of use and outstanding sound quality. Jeorge Tripps, who left behind his acclaimed boutique pedal company Way Huge to join forces with Line 6, is largely responsible for the ergonomic design employing uncomplicated switches, control knobs and footswitches that allowed guitarists to select models, adjust key parameters and access presets in the same simple manner as a using a stompbox. The engineering team at Line 6 also had insightful understanding of the effects that guitarists desired most, and they assembled an impressive collection of gear to analyze when developing the products' models.

While all four of Line 6's Modeler pedals far outlived most other digital modeling products, the DL4 has enjoyed timeless status for a variety of reasons. First of all, it offers models of a true best-of selection of delay effects: the Maestro EP-1 and EP-3 Echoplex and Roland RE-101 Space Echo tape delays, Boss DM-2 and Electro-Harmonix Deluxe Memory Man analog delay pedals and the TC Electronic 2290. Additionally, Line 6's own models created for the DL4 like Sweep Echo, Lo-Res Delay, Reverse and Auto-Volume Echo have become classics in their own right. The DL4 was also one of the first delay pedals to provide a built-in tap tempo function. The crowning touch was the addition of a looper feature that offers up to 28 seconds of recording time and provides highly intuitive operation via the Record/Overdub, Play/Stop, Play Once and ½ Speed/Reverse footswitch functions.

The DL4's affordability and ease of use instantly made it a hit with gigging and recording guitarists. Over the last 20 years, it's become a commonly sighted fixture at club shows all over the world, often seen on stage with several different bands during the same night. Its sound quality and expressive feel have earned it a devoted following amongst many of the world's top performers even though they can afford the most expensive processors and the tech to operate them. The DL4 has appeared in the rigs of literally hundreds of players, including Matt Bellamy, Mike Campbell, Bill Frisell, Dave Grohl, Kirk Hammett and James Hetfield of Metallica, Adam Jones, Johnny Marr, Gary Moore, Ed O'Brien and Thom Yorke of Radiohead, Joe Perry, Joe Satriani and many more.

The DL4's looper function has even played a major role in various styles of indie and experimental rock over the last few decades, used as a composition tool and performance instrument unto itself and inspiring artists like Battles, Minus the Bear and Reggie Watts. *Pitchfork*, the hipster bible of indie rock music, published an article about the DL4's role in modern music a few years ago, calling it "the most important guitar pedal of the last 20 years." In the *Pitchfork* article, Tyondai Braxton of Battles said, "I played that pedal more than I played any other instrument of the past 20 years. You start to incorporate how the pedal operates into how you work."

Although many alternatives and imitators have appeared over the years, none of them managed to surpass the DL4's success or render it obsolete. The new DL4 MkII may be a replacement for the original that greatly expands its sounds and capabilities, but because the DNA of the original DL4 remains intact, it is also a continuation of a classic that will comfort its original fans who have always liked it just the way it has been since the beginning. With a track record like that, it will probably be another two decades before the MkIII comes along. GW

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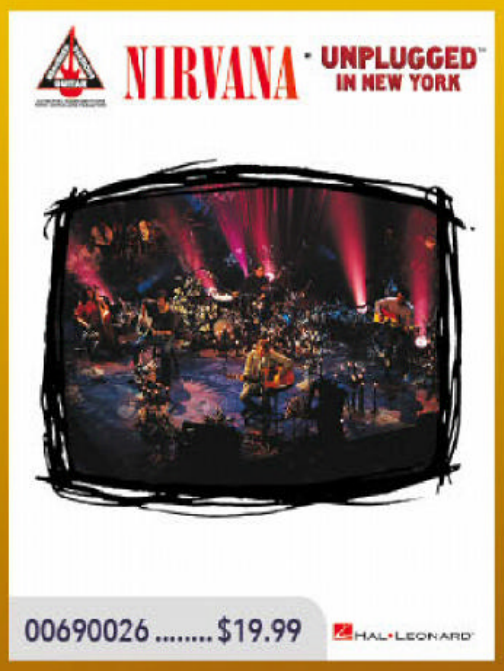

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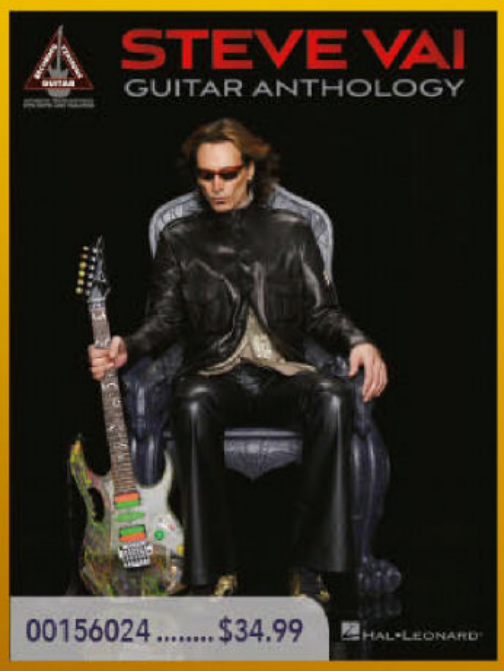

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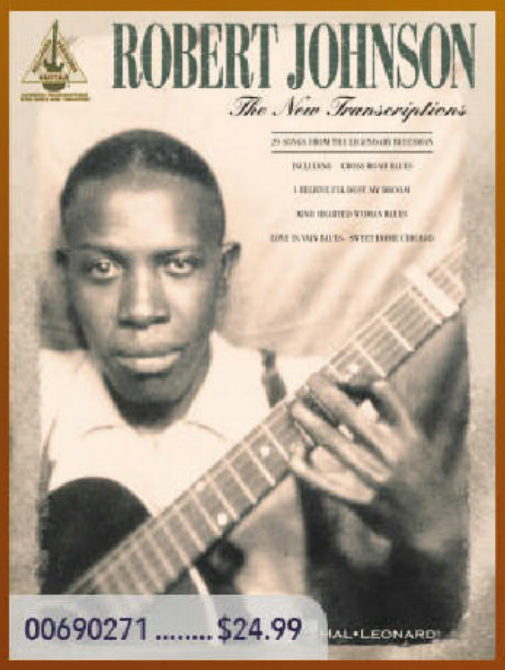

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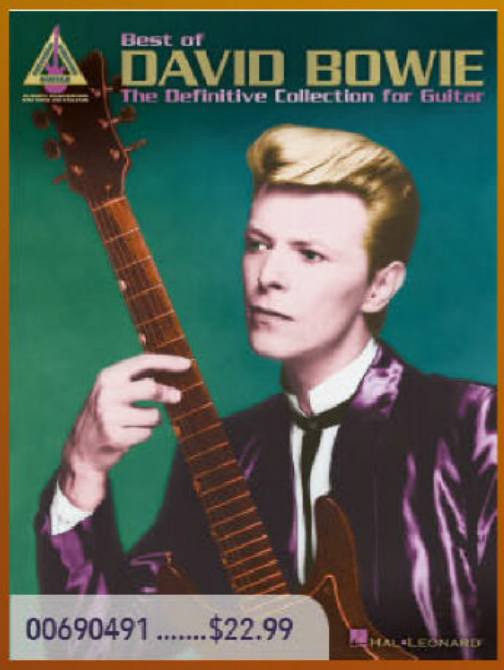

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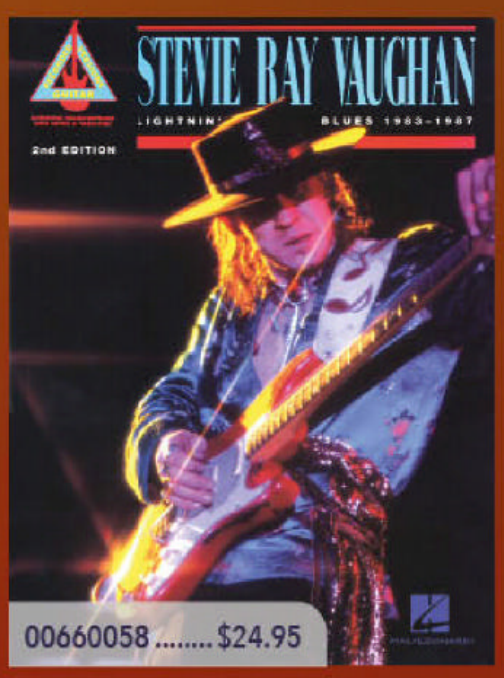

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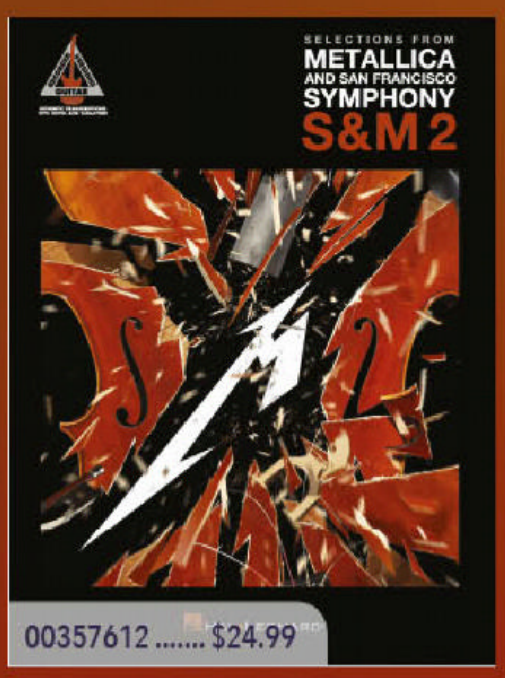

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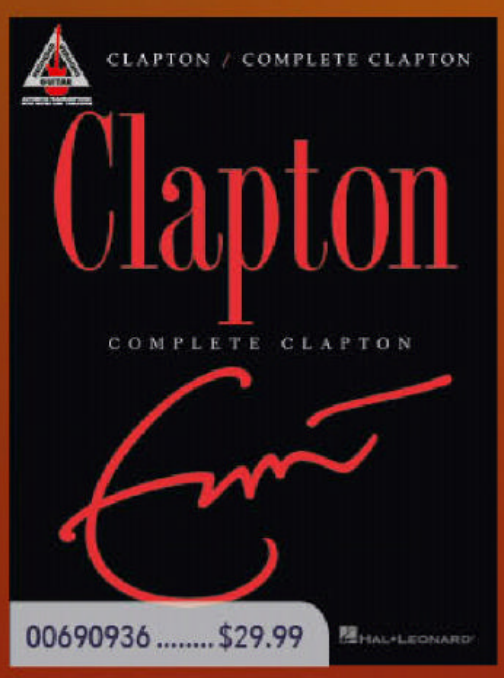

00690936 ..... $29.99

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SOUND CHECK

Blackstar Dept. 10 Dual Drive

the gear in review

77
MARTIN
SC-10E

78
EMERALD
Virtuo

79
FENDER
Acoustic Junior GO

80
NEW EQ

GUITAR WORLD PLATINUM AWARD EXCELLENCE

Crunch Time

BLACKSTAR DEPT. 10 VALVE PEDALS

By Chris Gill

OVER THE LAST few decades quite a few overdrive and distortion pedals incorporating a 12AX7/ECC83 preamp tube in their circuits have hit the market that promise to deliver true tube tone. The overall result, however, is usually "close but no cigar" as many of these pedals drive the tubes at low voltages. It's similar to using regular gas in a finely tuned, high-horsepower sports car — you will still get where you're going, but the experience isn't as responsive, dynamic and powerful as it could be. While these pedals often offer the warmth and satisfying crunch of tubes, the sound can be overly compressed and one-dimensional. On the other hand, Blackstar's new Dept. 10 valve pedals, which the company describes as "the world's most advanced valve pedals," all feature an ECC83 triode tube-driven at more than 200 volts to provide the headroom, dynamics, enhanced harmonics and organic saturation of a genuine tube amp. The Dept. 10 Boost is the simplest of the bunch, providing boost and EQ functions. The Dept. 10 Dual Drive and Dual Distortion pedals provide two channels each of overdrive and distortion, respectively, as well as various features that deliver "amp in a box" performance.

Front and rear views of the Blackstar Dept. 10 Dual Distortion [*left*], and the Dept. 10 Boost [*above*]

CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICES:
$219.99 (Dept. 10 Boost); $299.99 (Dept. 10 Dual Drive or Dual Distortion)
MANUFACTURER:
Blackstar Amplification, blackstaramps.com

- All three pedals harness the power of an ECC83 triode tube driven by more than 200 volts to deliver true tube tone and dynamic.
- The Dept. 10 Boost's passive James high- and low-shelving EQ circuit allows users to sculpt a wide variety of natural-sounding tones using just two knobs.
- The Dept. 10 Dual Drive and Dual Distortion pedals' Cab Rig output provides simulated room, mic and speaker cabinet for realistic direct tones.
- The Dual Drive and Dual Distortion pedals have two individual channels each with two selectable voices to provide the functionality of a custom two-channel amp.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE:**
If you love the responsive dynamics and harmonically rich overdrive and distortion tones but want to ditch the overweight transformers and bulk of a classic tube amp, Blackstar's Dept. 10 products provide true tube tone in a pedal format.

FEATURES Slightly larger than an MXR Phase 90, the Blackstar Dept. 10 Boost's compact design can comfortably fit onto a crowded pedal board. Its controls consist of only three knobs, one for boost and the remaining two are low and high controls for a passive James EQ stack (James EQ is the predecessor to the similar and better-known active Baxandall EQ stack, which both employ bass and treble shelving EQ). Mono ¼-inch input and output jacks are mounted on the right and left sides respectively, and a jack for the included 9-volt DC power adapter is on the back. Bypass switching is buffered.

The Dept. 10 Dual Drive and Dual Distortion each have a larger footprint, but also pack considerably more features. Both have identical control configurations but provide completely separate overdrive and distortion voicings and gain structures, respectively. Controls consist of individual footswitches for channel 1 and 2, individual gain and level knobs for each channel, a clean/crunch mini-toggle switch for channel 1, a crunch/overdrive (Dual Drive) or overdrive 1/2 (Dual Distortion) mini-toggle for channel 2 and one set of bass, middle, treble and ISF (Infinite Shape Feature) EQ controls shared by both channels. The input jack in on the right side; output and Cab Rig jacks are on the left; and send, return, USB audio, XLR line out and 9-volt DC (for the included adaptor) jacks are on the back. By connecting the Dual Drive or Dual Distortion to a computer and Blackstar's Architect software via USB, users can select from 250 different room, mic and speaker cabinet configurations and load three choices into the pedal.

PERFORMANCE The Dept. 10 Boost pedal provides a full selection of outstanding boost functions that cover the gamut from clean, transparent boost to overdrive crunch with shaped EQ. The passive James high and low shelving EQ circuit is much more versatile than typical passive 2- and 3-band EQ controls. The low and high controls are very interactive, but the settings always sound natural and organic. The EQ curve is essentially flat with both knobs at 12 o'clock. Setting both knobs at 0 provides a midrange hump, and with both at 10 the mids are scooped. Even with the Boost control up all the way, the tone never gets overly compressed, retaining sharp attack, expressive dynamics and natural string definition.

The Dual Drive and Dual Distortion work equally well as the heart of a pedalboard rig or even as a standalone amp with the Cab Rig output plugged directly into a mixing console for live performance and studio recording applications. The bass, middle and treble EQ are very versatile on their own, but the ISF knob takes tone shaping to another level. As expected, the Dual Distortion features higher levels of gain that provide more highly saturated and compressed distortion tones and slightly darker overall character, but both can provide a wide variety of outstanding clean, overdrive, crunch and distortion tones. With more than 200 volts hitting the ECC83, the sound truly rivals the dynamics, definition and punch of a full-size tube amp.

GUITAR WORLD PLATINUM AWARD EXCELLENCE

Top Model

MARTIN SC-10E

By Paul Riario

VENTURING TOWARD UNCHARTED territory, Martin Guitar took a plunge in 2020 by introducing the avant-garde SC-13E model geared toward players who favor an acoustic guitar with the same degree of playability as an electric. It was a bold move from the time-honored, pedigreed company that's well aware that its most ardent followers prefer their instruments deeply steeped in Martin's most traditional shapes and sounds. But despite its unconventional design, it seems the tried-and-true SC-13E became a successful gamble that paid off because, for 2022, Martin Guitar launched three additional SC Models: the SC-10E, SC-13E Special and the SC-13E Special Burst. While the unique architecture of the SC-13E remains intact — the Sure Align neck system, Tone Tension X-Bracing and asymmetrical body shape with dramatically sloped cutaway — catchy cosmetics, electronics and different tonewoods comprise some of the latest changes depending on the model. Since I already own the SC-13E, I dove at the chance to review the more affordable SC-10E.

FEATURES As mentioned before, the SC-10E retains the radically innovative Sure Align Linear Dovetail neck joint that affords guitarists tweakable adjustments of tilting the neck forwards and backward, high or low action, intonation and even scale length (the guitar features a 25.4–inch scale length); however, Martin still recommends involving a qualified dealer-tech here. Like the original, the SC-10E possesses a Sitka spruce top, a fine veneer of Koa back and sides, a Khaya (African Mahogany) veneer core, ebony headstock overlay, ebony fretboard and bridge, tortoise pickguard, Fishman MX-T electronics with a built-in tuner tucked inside the soundhole and Martin's High-Performance Taper neck with a lean profile that allows your wrist to naturally adjust its movement for a continually optimal playing position as you work your way up toward the generous heel-less cutaway. What's noticeably specific to this model is an ultra-thin satin finish rather than the original's gloss finish for the body and neck, and the color black as the leitmotif appearing in its binding, open-gear tuners, black sparkle acrylic and white mother of pearl aperture design rosette, and black sparkle bullseye inlay at the 12th fret.

PERFORMANCE Nearly every guitarist I've loaned the SC-10E to has remarked how effortless it is to play, and that comes as no surprise, because the SC-10E is setup as low and fast as some of my favorite electric guitars, making it all the more astonishing that an acoustic could command such swift playability. The low-profile velocity neck facilitates wide interval stretches and easy bends, and if you navigate past the 12th fret, your range of travel is practically unimpeded. I've touched upon it before, but Martin seems to have addressed every limitation that makes playing an acoustic guitar challenging with this modern SC model that encourages you to play faster and longer.

The other most striking thing about wthe SC-10E is its impressive volume and wide-open bronzy sparkle. Sure, I can casually point out that those sonic qualities may be attributed to its razor-thin satin finish that seems to freshly amplify its bright and airy tone, but, whereas my SC-13E occupies a more controlled frequency spectrum, the new SC-10E turns it all up in an openly, brassy bark. And that sound persists when plugged in because the Fishman MX-T electronics evenly articulate that liveliness. If you've ever thought you couldn't find a reasonably priced acoustic that plays as easily as an electric, you absolutely need to experience the wonder that is the SC-10E.

CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICE: $1,299
MANUFACTURER: Martin Guitar, martinguitar.com

- The SC-10E is treated with a thinly applied satin finish rather than gloss, which contributes to a naturally smooth and raw wood feel.
- Martin's Linear Dovetail neck joint offers near-limitless access to the upper frets as well as making action and intonation adjustments easier than ever.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE** Martin Guitar puts its best foot forward with the affordable SC-10E, which goes above and beyond what an acoustic is capable of in playability and tone.

GUITAR WORLD PLATINUM AWARD EXCELLENCE

Sound and Vision

EMERALD VIRTUO

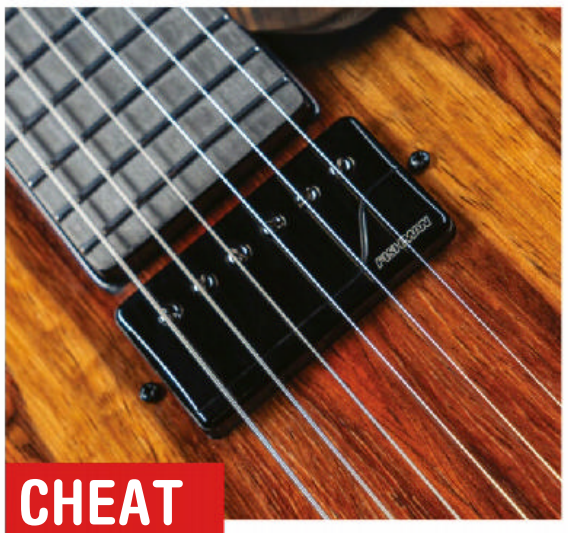
By Chris Gill

IRISH LUTHIER ALISTAIR Hay, founder of Emerald Guitars, is one of the most fascinating and visionary guitar designers of the last two decades. Readers may remember his dazzling Bahamut dragon guitar featured in the "It Might Get Weird" column in Guitar World's June 2013 issue or his incredible Ultra "alien" guitar played by Steve Vai on tour. While those guitars were radical visually, Emerald's carbon fiber production models are notable for their progressive features and highly ergonomic designs. Emerald's new Virtuo model, which combines acoustic, electric and synth controller features in a single instrument, is a great example of the company's visionary outlook that redefines the potential of our beloved instrument.

FEATURES The Emerald Virtuo is a true hybrid design built around a slim acoustic guitar base but featuring the fast, slim neck with 22 medium stainless steel frets and full fret access of an electric. The body and neck are crafted from rock-solid carbon fiber, but buyers can choose a wide selection of gorgeous veneer overlays like cocobolo, Macassar ebony, quilted tamo ash or many other woods for the body and headstock should they prefer the natural look of wood.

A non-traditional soundport is located on the upper bass bout that projects natural acoustic tone to the player and listeners alike. Pickups consist of a pair of Fishman Fluence humbuckers and a Graphtech Ghost piezo mounted under the bridge, which is itself a hybrid design combining six fully adjustable electric-style saddles mounted in an acoustic-style carbon fiber base. A stereo ¼-inch output allows users to split the piezo and electric signals to separate amps (or combine both using a mono cable), and a 13-pin MIDI output provides direct connection to compatible guitar synthesizer systems such as Roland's various units. The control configuration is admirably uncomplicated and streamlined, consisting of individual volume knobs for the electric, acoustic and synth sound sources, a tone knob for the electric pickups, a mini toggle for piezo/mix/electric pickup selection and a three-way pickup selector for the Fluence pickups. The tone control's push/pull function engages split or humbucking settings, while the electric volume control's push/pull functions select regular or hot rodded humbucker voices.

PERFORMANCE The Virtuo is strung with traditional electric strings, but its highly resonant body provides satisfying natural acoustic tones, especially when amplified with the piezo pickup. Switching over to the electric side, the Virtuo generates a surprisingly diverse selection of tones that include the percussive twang of a Tele, the sonorous voice of a Strat, the body and bark of a Les Paul and even the rich warmth of a 335. Blending the acoustic and electric voices together, especially when splitting the piezo to an acoustic-electric amp or sound system and the humbuckers to a distorted guitar amp, yields highly satisfying and expressive layers of tones. It may seem like an oversight that the synth section is not engaged with the switches, but actually its separate volume control is more than sufficient for layering it with the acoustic, electric or both tones together, as well as playing synths sound by themselves by turning down the electric and/or acoustic pickup volume controls (depending on where the mini toggle is set).

Weighing less than five pounds, the Virtuo is exceptionally comfortable to play. Thanks to the neck's compound 12-to-16-inch radius and slim, flat profile, the playability and comfort is identical to that of an electric, allowing guitarists to perform string bends and other techniques without changing their playing style. Whereas many previous hybrid designs have usually involved compromises to combine electric and acoustic tones, the Emerald Virtuo delivers a satisfying experience for acoustic and electric specialists alike, with the added bonus of guitar synth capabilities for those who want that option as well.

CHEAT SHEET

- **STREET PRICE:** $3,600 (as shown, finished in Padauk veneer)
  MANUFACTURER: Emerald Guitars, emeraldguitars.com
- Push/pull volume and tone knobs for the electric section select three different voices for the Fishman Fluence pickups: classic humbucker, hot-rodded humbucker and split coil.
- Neck features include a 25 ½-inch scale length, 22 medium stainless steel frets, 12-16-inch compound radius and deep heel that provides access to the entire fretboard.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE:** The Emerald Virtuo is a brilliantly designed hybrid instrument that delivers true acoustic-electric and electric tones, outstanding ergonomics and playability and the ability to easily access guitar synth textures.

Buzz Bin

Fender Acoustic Junior Go

GUITAR WORLD GOLD AWARD PERFORMANCE

WHILE I CAN'T say for sure, I have to imagine acoustic amps must be a hard sell to musicians. Why? For one, the reason you play an acoustic is not to be tied to an amplifier, and secondly, if you eventually do end up using your acoustic live, a D.I. box or an acoustic preamp stompbox will suffice in amplifying your signal through a PA system, which makes bringing an acoustic amp unnecessary. But I'm not one to count out acoustic amps entirely because I'll be the first to tell you that A) I use one, and B) I guarantee you, Fender's Acoustic Junior Go will make you rethink the idea that you don't need one.

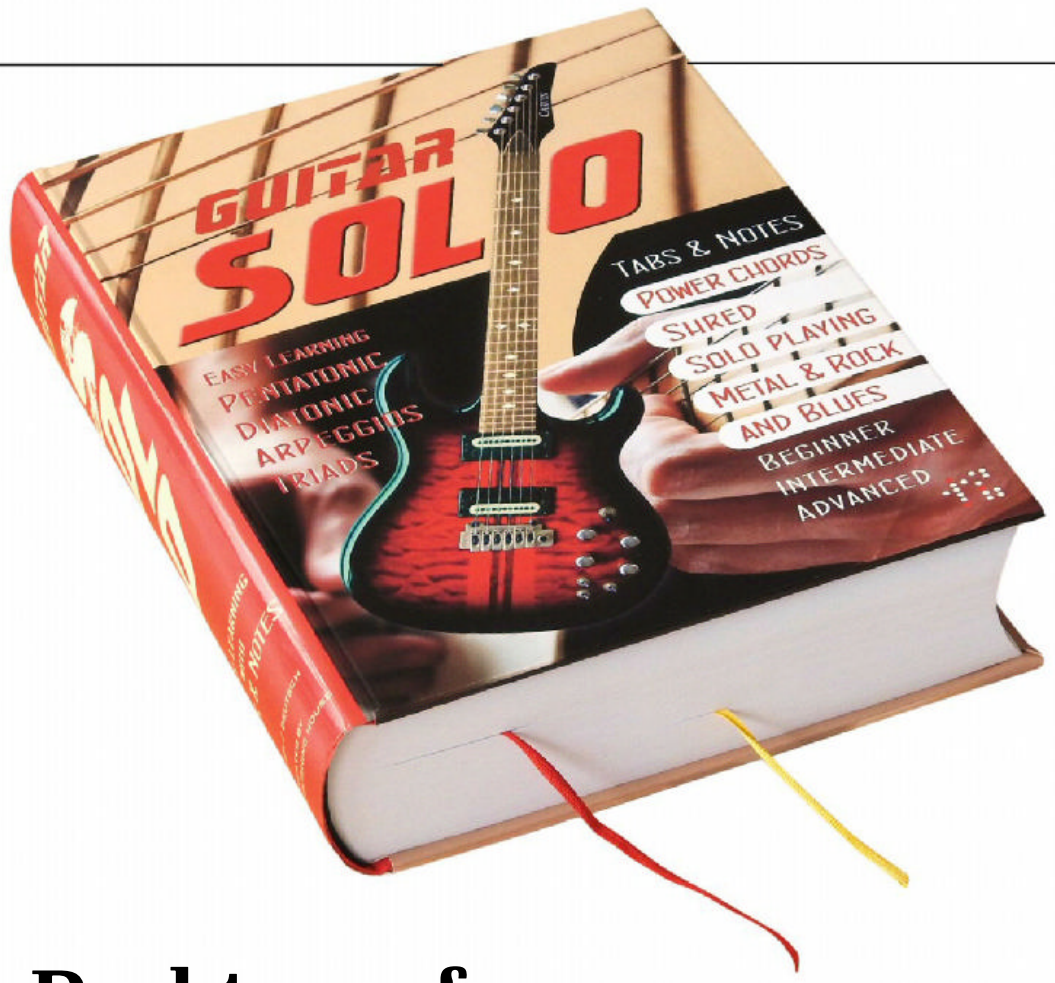
So what makes the Acoustic Junior Go a great companion for your acoustic? Well, it's compact and powerful at 100 watts of output power with a rechargeable battery that hangs in there for more than five hours of playing time at full volume. It also works splendidly as a portable two-channel PA with combo XLR/TRS inputs that are interchangeable between instrument and microphone use, which is essential for buskers and musicians who frequently perform in coffeehouses and smaller venues. The AJG also has identical volume, FX level, FX select (for the eight studio-quality effects), 3-band EQ and phase switch controls on both channels. Other features found on the AJG that you won't normally find on other acoustic amps include Bluetooth operation for wireless audio streaming and backing tracks, USB jack for audio recording, two XLR line outputs for stage or recording, a much-needed kickstand to tilt the amp, and the very cool bonus of an onboard 90-second looper.

At 17 lbs., the AJG is ridiculously lightweight, truly making it an "on the go" amplifier, but even more impressive is the combined 8-inch low-frequency driver and hi-fi tweeter to deftly capture the sound of your acoustic and vocals in such a detailed "surround-sound" quality that I can only best describe it as head-turning — especially coming from such a small amp. While the AJG provides ample volume, it may not be enough for bigger stages, but its dual outputs allow you to wire it to a more powerful PA to translate your settings. The onboard effects sound exceptional and come in handy for turning dry performances into ambient ones. The built-in looper is wildly fun, useful and indispensable once you make it part of your repertoire, but the only bummer is you'll definitely need to spring for the optional four-button footswitch to maximize that looping potential.

— *Paul Riario*

STREET PRICE: $499.99; (optional) MGT-4 footswitch, $79.99
MANUFACTURER: Fender, fender.com

New EQ
WHAT'S NEW AND COOL



Desktop reference: Sometimes you need a tome — and your tone — close at hand. Here are a couple to make you sound erudite

CEM Publishing

GUITAR SOLO BOOK

Whether you're a total guitar beginner or an advanced shredder, CEM Publishing's *Guitar Solo* book contains everything you need to take your playing to the next level and beyond. This book is packed with lessons ranging from basic music theory to genre-specific soloing techniques. Arpeggios, diatonic harmony, shred exercises, modes, triads, scales — it's all here! Instructors at the Sweetwater Academy of Music and Technology love this book's no-nonsense approach to guitar education. *Guitar Solo* boasts over 1,100 pages, but only 1 percent is text, so you'll spend less time reading and more time making that ever-important visual connection with your instrument. Plus, *Guitar Solo*'s wide variety of tablature and traditional notation exercises on genres ranging from blues to heavy metal makes it an indispensable tool for advancing guitarists of almost any background. Michael Angelo Batio says, "This is the most comprehensive book on guitar that has ever been written," and he goes further, "...it is literally THE ONE book that you can have that would be the dictionary of modern guitar."

STREET PRICE: $99.99
sweetwater.com

Positive Grid

SPARK MINI

The Spark MINI from Positive Grid is a mind-blowing portable powerhouse amplifier that delivers innovative smart guitar playing to go, along with high-quality Bluetooth audio streaming. A rechargeable battery ensures playing and streaming all day long. The amp features an angled speaker configuration and a downward-facing passive radiator to deliver massive, multi-dimensional sound, complemented by user-selectable, custom EQ settings for listening, playing, or streaming music. The Spark MINI also inherits the smart features found in the flagship Spark amp, including an all-new Smart Jam, that can generate multiple backing tracks that respond to the player's intensity. A handy video creation tool lets musicians share their live performances on social media. You can quickly dial-in tone presets using the onboard knobs, and access more than 10,000 additional presets for free on Positive Grid's online ToneCloud community. The Spark app also offers 33 ultra-realistic amps and 43 effects for thousands of sonic possibilities. It's offered in classic black or luxe Pearl (white) Tolex options to fit any decor or lifestyle.

STREET PRICE: TBA
positivegrid.com/Spark-mini

IN DEEP

by Andy Aledort

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/may2022

NIGHT OF THE HAWK

The playing style of Chicago blues legend Robert Nighthawk

THOUGH ROBERT NIGHTHAWK is without question one of the greatest and most influential blues guitarists of all time, he never received the acclaim of his contemporaries Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Buddy Guy, Jimmy Reed and many others. In reality, Nighthawk was performing throughout the South years before these other legends, and his playing and singing influenced just about every one of them.

Born Robert Lee McCollum, Nighthawk is best known as a brilliant and innovative slide guitarist. Elements of his style can be heard in the playing of Earl Hooker, Mick Taylor, Duane Allman, Ry Cooder and every electric slide guitarist since the mid-Sixties. B.B. King has said that, while a young newcomer on the scene, he tried his hardest to replicate Nighthawk's slide vibrato with his fingers, exclaiming, "But my fingers weren't smart enough to do it right!" Many would respond by saying that B.B. King's finger vibrato is more influential than any other electric blues guitarist ever.

Robert played in standard tuning and wore a metal slide on his pinkie, freeing up his first three fingers for standard fretting. He played many songs in the key of E, and with the slide on the pinkie, it's easy to fret the I - IV - V (one - four - five) chords of a standard blues in the key of E: E7, A7 and B7. As shown in **FIGURE 1**, these three chords are fretted within the first two frets and utilize open strings. Each can be fretted with the index, middle and ring fingers exclusively, so the presence of the slide on the pinkie causes no hindrance.

Like Earl Hooker, Nighthawk would fret notes conventionally for chords and playing single-note lines. **FIGURE 2** illustrates the E blues scale (E, G, A, B♭, B, D) with the addition of the major 3rd, G♯, as Robert would include this note in most phrases.

FIGURE 3 illustrates a 12-bar form played in Robert's style: two-note chords on the bottom strings are augmented with bass-like ascending phrases. In bars 7 and 8, a sliding riff is played on the top three strings; this is a standard blues phrase used by Robert Johnson, Lightnin' Hopkins and many others, including, years later, Jimi Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughan. In bars 11 and 12, single-note licks are played in loose rhythmic patterns, à la Nighthawk's style.

FIGURE 4 presents a four-bar slide lick played in Robert's style. The lines are very melodic and repetitive. When listening to the example in the video lesson for this column, pay close attention to the very expressive, signature slide vibrato.

One can watch the Robert Nighthawk performing on Maxwell Street in the 1964 documentary, *And This Is Free*, in which he is featured singing, "I'm Gonna Murder My Baby," aka "Cheatin' and Lyin' Blues," and "Goin' Down To Eli's," a cover of a song made famous by Chicago blues guitarist Pat Hare, who, in 1963, did just that: he shot and killed his girlfriend and spent the last 16 years of his life in jail. Johnny Winter called "I'm Gonna Murder My Baby" the greatest blues song of all time.

FIG. 1

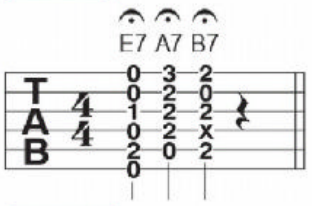


FIG. 2 E blues scale with the major 3rd added

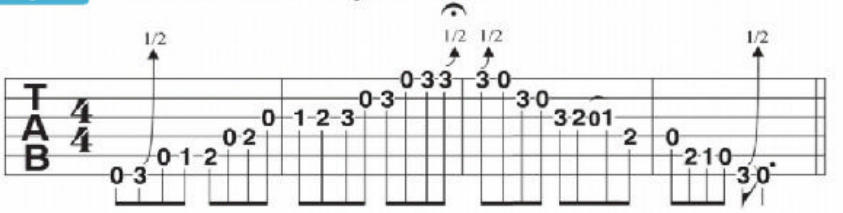


FIG. 3

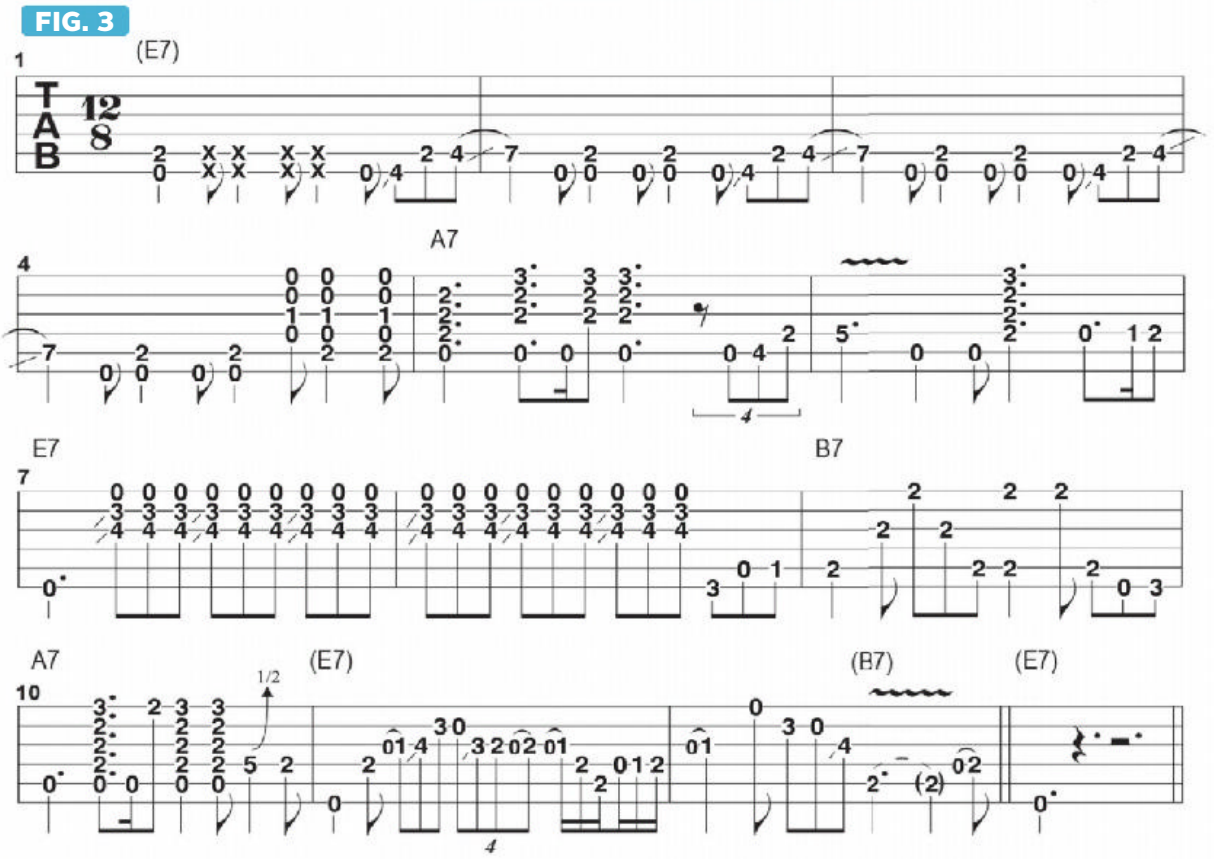
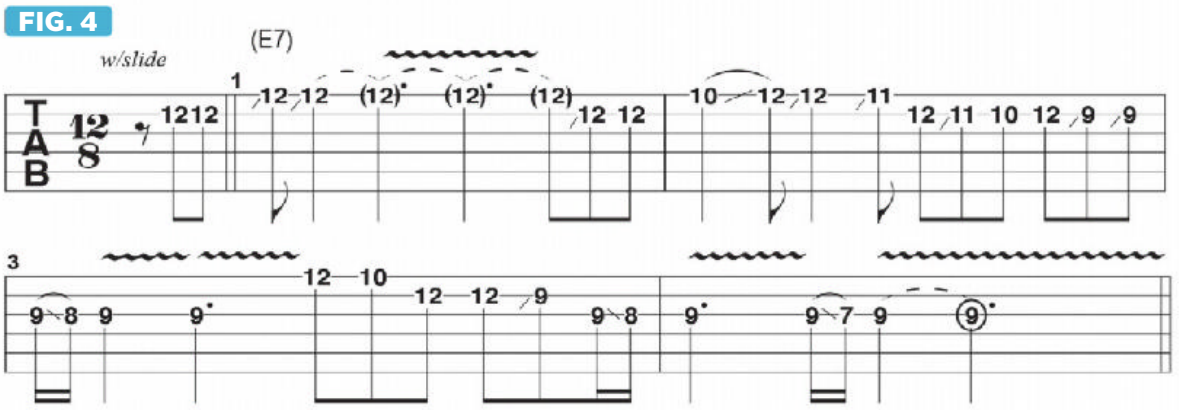


FIG. 4



Guitar World **associate editor Andy Aledort is recognized worldwide for his vast contributions to guitar instruction, via his many best-selling instructional DVDs, transcription books and online lessons. His new double album, *Light of Love*, is available now.**

TALES FROM NERDVILLE

by Joe Bonamassa

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/may2022

ONE GOOD TURN

Devising creative blues turnarounds

IF YOU'VE EVER had to kick off a slow blues tune — and odds are that you have on at least a few occasions (more than a few for me!) — there are a number of different ways you can do it. A classic way to start a slow blues in A is with the turnaround shown in **FIGURE 1**. Following the low A root note, I play chromatically descending 6th intervals, or 6ths, fretted on the G and high E strings. Most blues guitarists rely on these types of chromatically descending 6ths, or ascending ones, for turnarounds, as well as for use in rhythm parts or during a solo.

I came up with an unusual approach to the turnaround that sometimes freaks people out a little bit. The technique I'm about to demonstrate is based on sliding half-step bends, so they can sound a little jarring, in that they are not perfectly in tune. If you have perfect pitch, watch out! There's a bit of a rub in the way these half step bends sit on top of the chords. In fact, that is what I like about them. To my ears, this turnaround technique sounds very expressive and provides some of the "grease" that I love to hear in blues guitar playing.

Staying in the key of A, **FIGURE 2** starts on the tonic, with an A root note played on the A string's 12th fret, sounded in conjunction with a half-step bend on the B string, from C, the minor 3rd, to C♯, the major 3rd. This "shape" then shifts up a half step, to B♭, followed by a descending lick that makes brief reference to the V (five) chord, E7. Bar 3 illustrates a standard single-note blues lick, followed in bar 4 by a restatement of the A7-to-B♭7 half-step bends. In bar 5, I apply this approach to F7 and E7, the latter chord functioning as the V (five), which then resolves back to the I (one), A.

The blues has been around for a while, so I think it's always cool to find some new avenues to navigate within the boundaries of the genre in ways that sound a bit different, and these half step bends do exactly that.

FIGURE 3 offers another twist. In this example, I begin on the IV (four) chord, D7, sounding the D root note along with F♯, the major 3rd, which then moves up a half step to the 4th of D, G. The idea then shifts up chromatically: keeping the G note on top, the lower note moves up to E♭, which creates the sound of an E♭ tonic and G, the major 3rd, above it, after which G slides up a half step to A♭, the fourth of E♭, and then the whole thing moves up one more half step to reference E7. Through the remainder of this lick, I incorporate the prior half-step bend technique. The sound is ominous, and I like the musical tension it creates.

I love the Buddy Guy approach, wherein he purposely will bend notes a little out of tune to get that "rub." **FIGURE 4** offers another example of how to use half-step bends to give your riffs some *attitude*.

FIG. 1

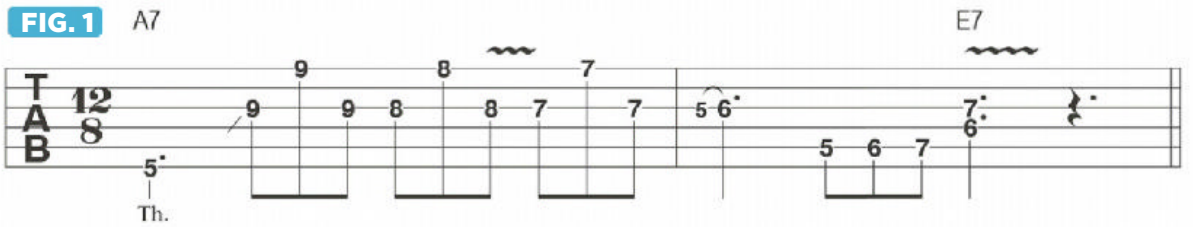


FIG. 2

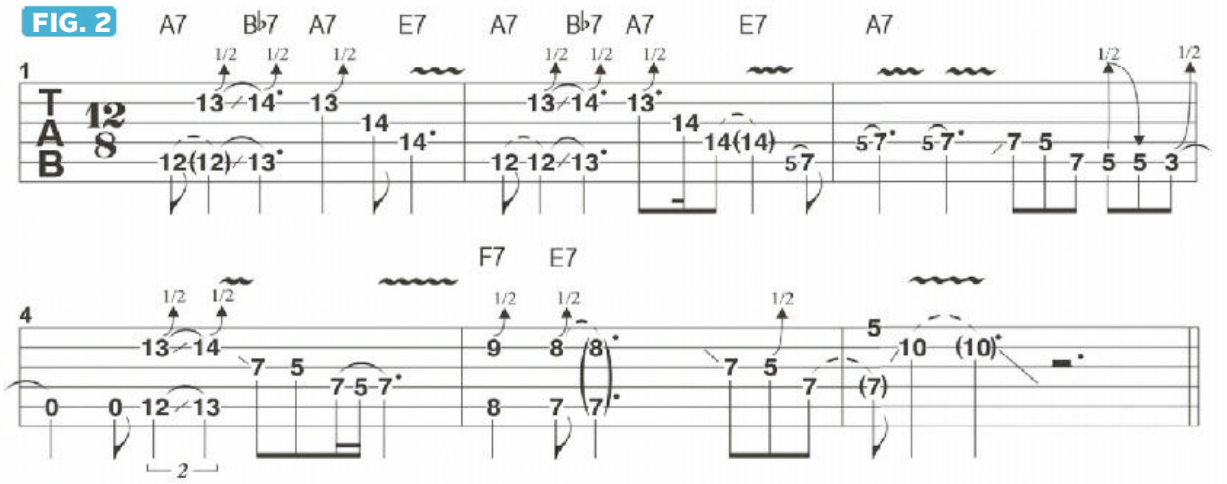


FIG. 3

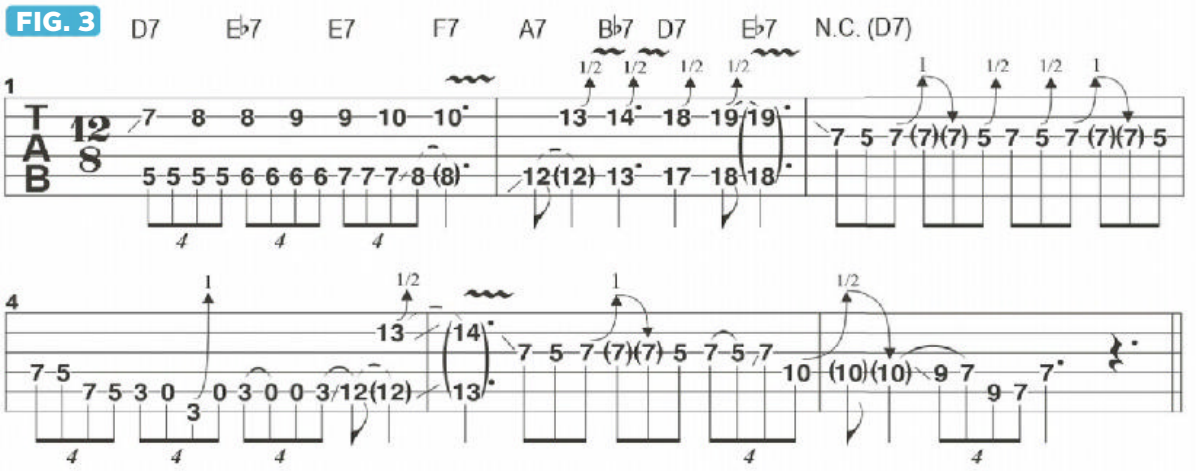
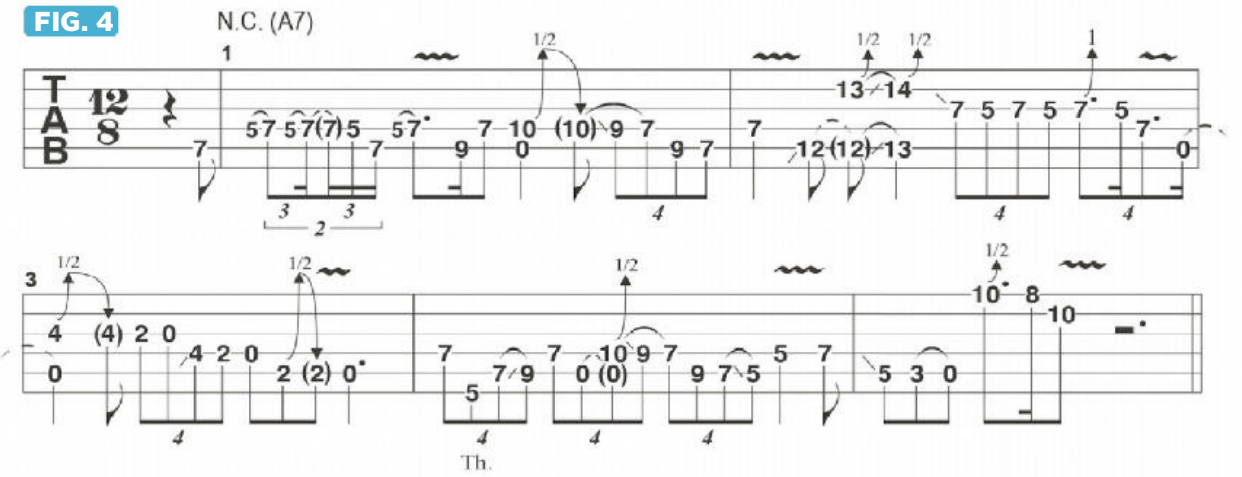


FIG. 4



Joe Bonamassa is one of the world's most popular and successful blues-rock guitarists — not to mention a top producer and *de facto* ambassador of the blues (and of the guitar in general). His latest album, *Time Clocks*, is out now, as is Eric Gales' *Crown*, which Bonamassa co-produced.

ELEANOR JANE

MELODIC MUSE

by Andy Timmons

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/may2022

IT'S ELEMENTAL

A look at the song "E.W.F."

THIS MONTH, I'D like to take a look at another tune from my brand-new album, *Electric Truth*, titled, "E.W.F." As some of you may have ascertained, the title of this song is a thinly veiled reference to the incredible band Earth, Wind & Fire. The song is a bit of a tribute to the band's phenomenal guitarist, Al McKay, who contributes beautiful guitar work to every track he records with EWF.

"E.W.F." is a very funky, swinging and bluesy affair, driven by a repeating ascending lick that's built from double-stops, which are two-note pairs (sometimes referred to as *dyads*). **FIGURE 1** illustrates the track's opening eight-bar rhythm part, which is built from a harmonized melody played on pairs of adjacent strings, starting on the bottom two and gradually moving up in pairs to the G and B strings. I lightly palm-mute throughout the phrase, gently resting the edge of my pick-hand palm across the bridge saddles in order to create a more percussive sound while also eliminating any ringing of unwanted strings.

The rhythmic feel of the lick is essential: the phrases are built from combinations of eighth and 16th notes, but a "swing" feel is applied to the 16th notes. In other words, what is written as four consecutive 16th notes is actually played as two sets of swing 16ths, which are based on 16th-note triplets, with the first two notes of each triplet set tied together, resulting in a lopsided "long-short" sound. This creates an accented feel on the first and third 16th notes of each beat — "*dah*-da-*dah*-da" — as opposed to all of the 16th notes being played uniformly and evenly.

The first two pairs, A and C♯, and B and D, are 3rds apart, diatonic to, or within the scale structure of, the B Dorian mode (B, C♯, D, E, F♯, G♯, A), as shown in **FIGURE 2**. As depicted in **FIGURE 3**, I follow the first two pairs by laying, or barring, my fretting fingers across the A and D strings, and the D and G strings, at the same fret, which yields a harmony of 4th intervals.

When barring a fretting finger across the G and B strings at the same fret, the harmony changes to major 3rds, due to the tuning of these two strings. Notice that the pattern itself is built from the repetition of the first measure played against alternate "following" measures as the lick progresses.

A useful way to look at this riff is to think of the lower note in each pair as being the melody, and the higher note as the harmony. Looking at the lower notes only, the phrase is essentially based on the B minor pentatonic scale (B, D, E, F♯, A), which is illustrated in a harmonized fashion in **FIGURE 4**.

In bars 2, 4, 6 and 8 of the intro lick, I play pairs of notes on the G and B strings, starting with D, which is the minor, or "flatted," 3rd (♭3), and A, the (flatted 7th (♭7). That note then moves down a half step to the major 6th, G♯, as shown in **FIGURE 5**. This two-note voicing is a staple of funk rhythm guitar playing and can be heard in many James Brown songs.

Bar 2 ends with a descending phrase based on B minor pentatonic. As demonstrated in **FIGURE 6**, you can cycle this phrase repeatedly to help get it comfortably under your fingers.

FIG. 1

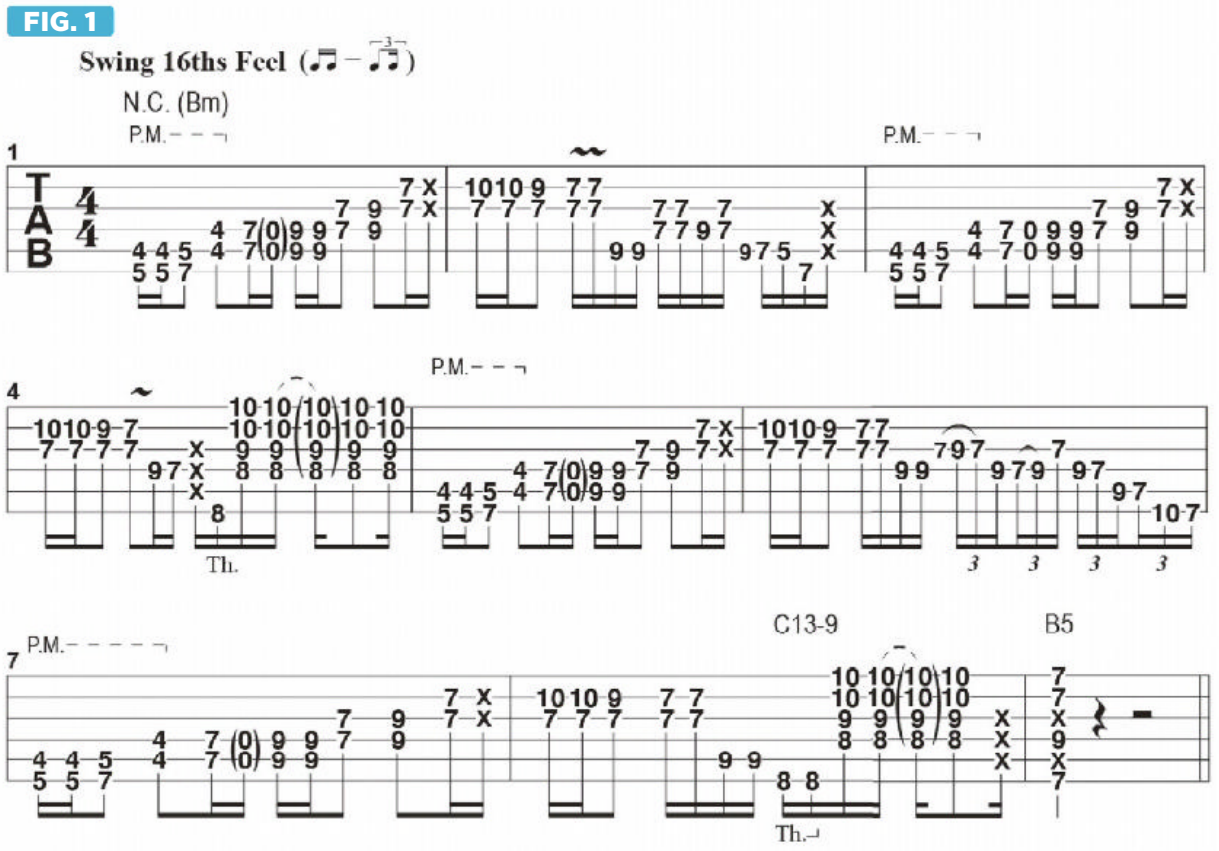


FIG. 2

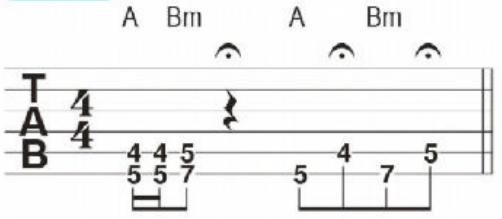


FIG. 3

FIG. 4

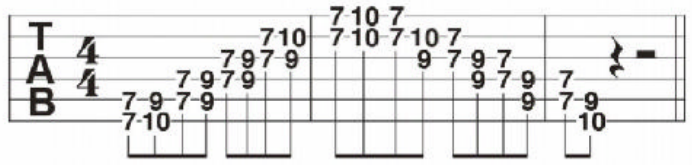


FIG. 5

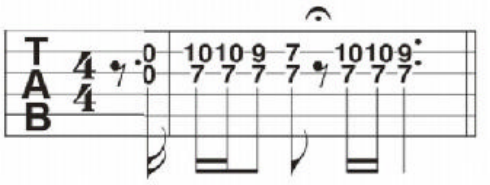
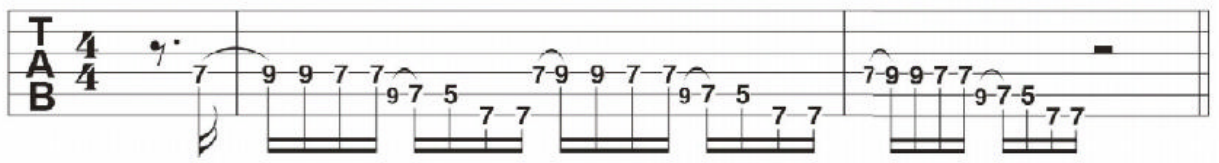


FIG. 6



Andy Timmons is a world-renowned guitarist known for his work with the Andy Timmons Band, as well as Danger Danger and Simon Phillips. Visit andytimmons.com and guitarxperience.net to check out his recordings and many instructional releases

SIMONE CECHETTI

18+

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BLUES TRUTH
by Kirk Fletcher

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/may2022

BABY DON'T YOU WANT TO GO

The Chicago blues sound of Buddy Guy, Junior Wells and Magic Sam

IN THIS COLUMN, I'd like to go over some of the basics of the classic Chicago blues shuffle style, as heard in the iconic recordings of Magic Sam, Buddy Guy, Junior Wells, Earl Hooker and many others.

Let's start by laying down a signature Chicago-style shuffle groove in the key of A. As shown in **FIGURE 1**, the shuffle is played in $\frac{12}{8}$ meter, which may be counted "*one* two three, *four* five six, *sev* eight nine, *ten* lev twelve" or "*one* two three, *two* two three, *three* two three, *four* two three," in either case with three evenly spaced triplets falling within each of the four primary beats. This pattern begins with four bars on the I (one) chord, A7, played in 4th position. On the downbeat and upbeat of beat 1 in bars 1-4, I play an A7 voicing, which I then follow through the rest of the bar with an ascending bass-like single-note riff. This chord voicing avoids the G string, so we end up with a nice open 6th interval between the D and B strings. The subsequent single-note riff is based on the A Mixolydian mode (A, B, C♯, D, E, F♯, G) with an emphasis on the ♭7 (flatted 7th), G. Note that I prefer to use all downstrokes when playing this type of single-note riff.

In bars 5 and 6, the progression moves to the IV (four) chord, D7, and the riff is simply transposed up a 4th. The same 7th chord "grip" is moved one string over to the next higher set of strings, still in 4th position, with no note sounded on the B string and the 6th intervals occurring between the G and high E strings. This is followed by the ascending bass-like pattern, based this time on D Mixolydian (D, E, F♯, G, A, B, C) with an emphasis on the ♭7, C. Bars 7 and 8 feature a return to the I (one) chord, A7.

In bar 9, the progression moves to the V (five) chord, E7. Simply move the 4th-position D7 voicing and riff shape up two frets to 6th position. Bar 10 features a return to the IV (four) chord, D7, and we finish with two bars back on the A7 chord and riff.

When playing this repeating pattern on each chord, strive for precise execution and articulation, with a sharp attack on the chords and a combination of ringing notes and staccato (short) notes for the riff. As always, try to lock into the groove to make this rhythm part as *swinging* as possible.

FIG. 1 A7

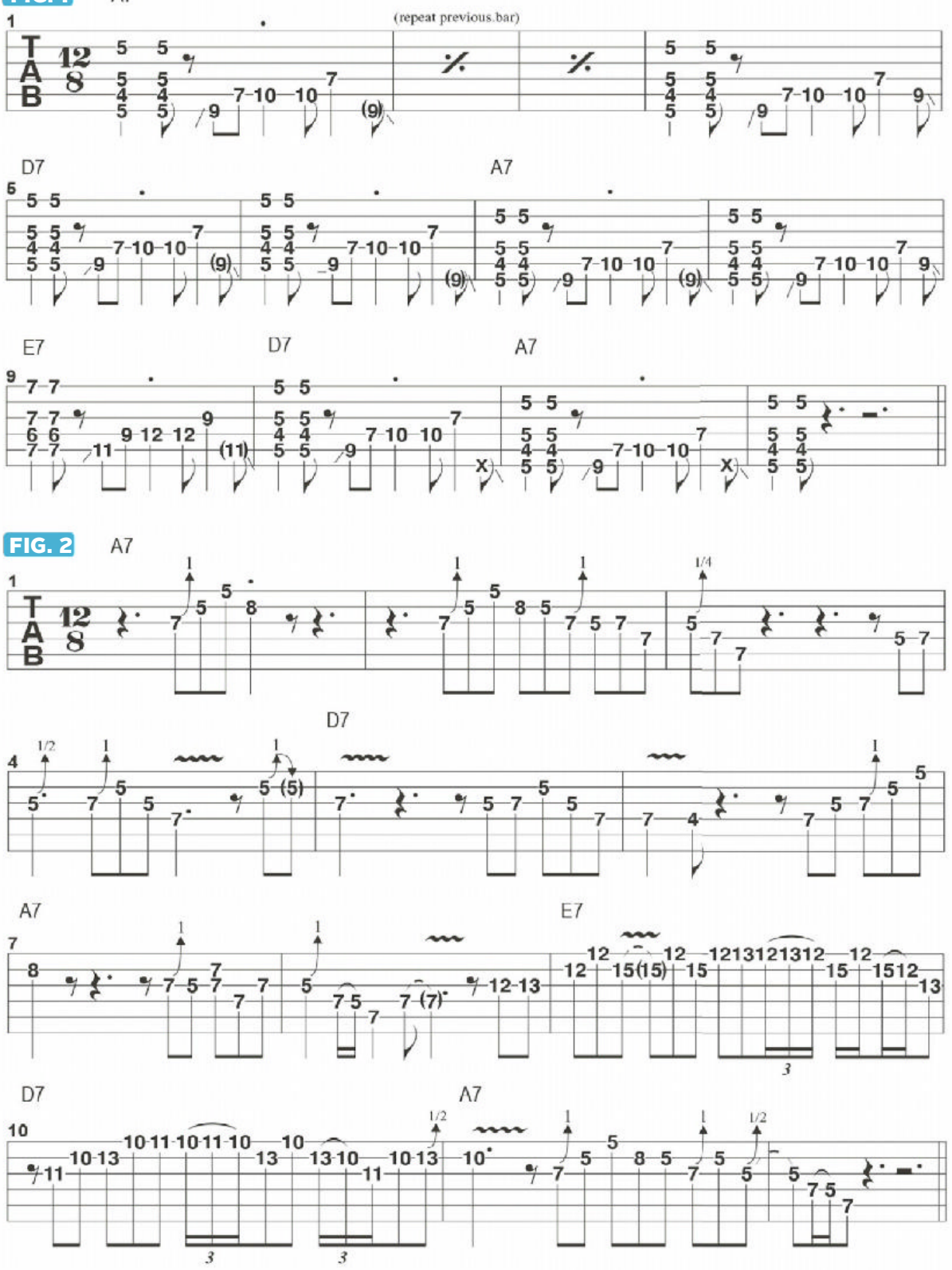


FIG. 2 A7

FIGURE 2 presents a solo played over this rhythm part. Stylistically, I'm going for an Otis Rush/Buddy Guy/Magic Sam type of vibe. Bars 1-4 are played over the I chord, A7, and as you can see, the licks are a bit sparse and rhythmically very specific. In this way, the solo functions as much like a "theme" as it does a guitar solo. In bars 5 and 6, over the D7 chord, I alter the melody slightly and then return to it when we come back to A7 in bars 7 and 8.

Over the E7 and D7 chords in bars 9 and 10, I use the opportunity to break into some new rhythmic and melodic territory before bringing the solo "back home" in the last two bars with a restatement of the opening theme.

Kirk Fletcher, a former member of the Fabulous Thunderbirds, is an internationally respected guitarist and teacher. His latest album, *My Blues Pathway*, was nominated for a 2021 Blues Music Award.

RICK GOULD

Performance Notes

HOW TO PLAY THIS MONTH'S SONGS **By Jimmy Brown**

"DON'T DREAM IT'S OVER"

Mateus Asato

RISING GUITAR STAR and YouTube sensation Mateus Asato is continually attracting new fans the world over with his soulful style, musical versatility and artistry. His instrumental cover of this popular love song from the mid-Eighties, originally recorded by Crowded House, features the guitarist performing his tastefully crafted chord-melody arrangement on his Suhr Strat-style electric guitar with a warm, clean tone that's treated with a dreamy long-tail reverb.

Asato performs his arrangement fingerstyle, which enables him to selectively pluck neighboring or non-adjacent strings simultaneously, as opposed to having to strum them with a pick. Using his fingers and thumb in this way also allows the guitarist to arpeggiate chord voicings, accent certain notes and manipulate his guitar's whammy bar with minimal pick-hand movement and thus great efficiency.

As both Jimi Hendrix and SRV had done on their masterpieces "Little Wing" and "Lenny," respectively, Mateus occasionally uses his fret-hand thumb to grab a bass root note on his low E string for certain chords, so as to intentionally avoid the thick sound of a textbook barre chord and also free up his fingers to perform little melodic embellishments and chord "extensions" with well-placed hammer-ons and pull-offs. And as Stevie had done in "Lenny," he also uses his whammy bar to produce gentle vibratos and chord shakes throughout the performance. But notice that Mateus also employs finger vibrato during certain parts, such as section D, which produces a distinctly different sound and feel than a vibrato effected with the bar, with the pitch modulating slightly upward, as opposed to mostly downward.

Throughout the performance, Asato makes great and frequent use of quick legato finger slides as a highly expressive element, which he applies to both single notes and two- and three-note shapes. These decorative embellishments, though subtle and fleeting, add soulfullness and a bluesy quality to the phrases. When performing them, try not to squeeze the strings any harder than necessary to produce a clear tone, as doing so will only increase friction, making the movement more arduous than it needs to be.

"INSIDE OUT"

XYZ

THIS SUPER CATCHY hair metal rock-radio hit from 1989 epitomizes the genre's innovative and enduringly appealing guitar stylings, with exciting, punchy riffs and flashy, breathtaking lead licks, all compliments of guitarist Marc Diglio. No doubt inspired by the legendary Eddie Van Halen and other great hard rockers and high-tech shredders from the Eighties West Coast rock scene, Diglio crafted a suite of dynamic, cohesive riffs for this song and a dazzling, melodic solo that elevates the arrangement to an artistic climax that appeals to musicians and non-musicians alike.

Sporting a hot-rodded super-Strat-like guitar with its bridge humbucker pickup feeding a cranked-up Marshall tube amp, Diglio achieves a tight, muscular "hi-fi distortion" tone, which he harnesses to perform the song's rhythm and lead parts with an elegantly light touch and minimum of physical effort, taking advantage of his ax's slinky action and a powerful amplification engine. The guitarist kicks off the song with its main chorus riff, which he performs entirely with downstrokes, for a punchy attack, alternating between accented chord hits and palm-muted single bass notes on his open low E and A strings, an approach he continues to take with the more vocal-subservient verse riff at section B. Notice how this chunky feel gives way to a more wide-open sound at the first pre-chorus (see section C), where Diglio lets up on the palm muting and allows his power chords to roar and ring.

Diglio's solo, beginning at section I, features a tasteful plethora of flashy rock guitar moves, such as whammy bar dips and dives, string bends and harmonics, both of the natural and pinch-induced variety (indicated by the abbreviations N.H. and P.H.). The decimal tab number "5.3" in bar 45 indicates that the "sweet spot" for that particular natural harmonic, which is a rather faint and elusive sonic "star," is located approximately 3/10ths the distance from the 5th fret to the 6th.

In transcribing Diglio's fluid fretboard tapping run in bars 53-56, we've streamlined the rhythms slightly, to render a more reader-friendly representation of the phrasing, as it relates to the underlying beat and groove.

"HEAVEN BESIDE YOU"

Alice in Chains

AIC MASTERMIND JERRY Cantrell is one of modern hard rock's most distinguished guitarists and talented and prolific songwriters, one who has penned many powerful riffs and hauntingly beautiful songs, using both acoustic and richly overdriven electric guitar sounds. This hit single from 1995's *Alice in Chains* features several of Jerry's signature rhythm guitar moves, such as menacing single-note riffs that include string bends and shimmering chord voicings for which the guitarist cleverly incorporates the use of open strings together with fretted notes played at or past the 5th fret. Cantrell's fairly simple but powerful and highly effective blues-rock-based lead playing and bold finger vibrato are also featured here, with a solo section that brings the song to a dramatic climax.

When playing the half-step bend in the repeating intro and verse riff, be sure to pull the D string downward, in toward your palm, as Jerry does. Although you could alternatively push it upward, doing so creates a slightly different playing feel and makes it a little harder to precisely control the pitch of the bend. Pulling the string down also keeps the tip of your 1st finger from crashing into the A string, which comes into play right afterward.

The bluesy yet precisely intonated double-stop bends in bars 7, 17 and 19 require some finesse to accurately execute, as the A note on the G string's 14th fret needs to go up a whole step, to B, while the C♯ at the same fret on the B string only goes up a half step, to D. Compare barring and pushing both strings with your 3rd finger to fretting them individually, with the tips of your 3rd and 4th fingers, and see which approach better enables you to control the pitches.

The bridge riff at section E features a set of highly unusual and interesting chord voicings, for which Cantrell doubles the G note on the D string's 5th fret with the open G string, which lends an eerie quality to the passage. When playing it, be sure not to inadvertently mute the open G notes with your fretting fingers.

Near the end of his solo, in bar 50, Jerry introduces one of his trademark dissonant riffs. Again, be sure to keep your fretting fingers clear of the higher open strings here.

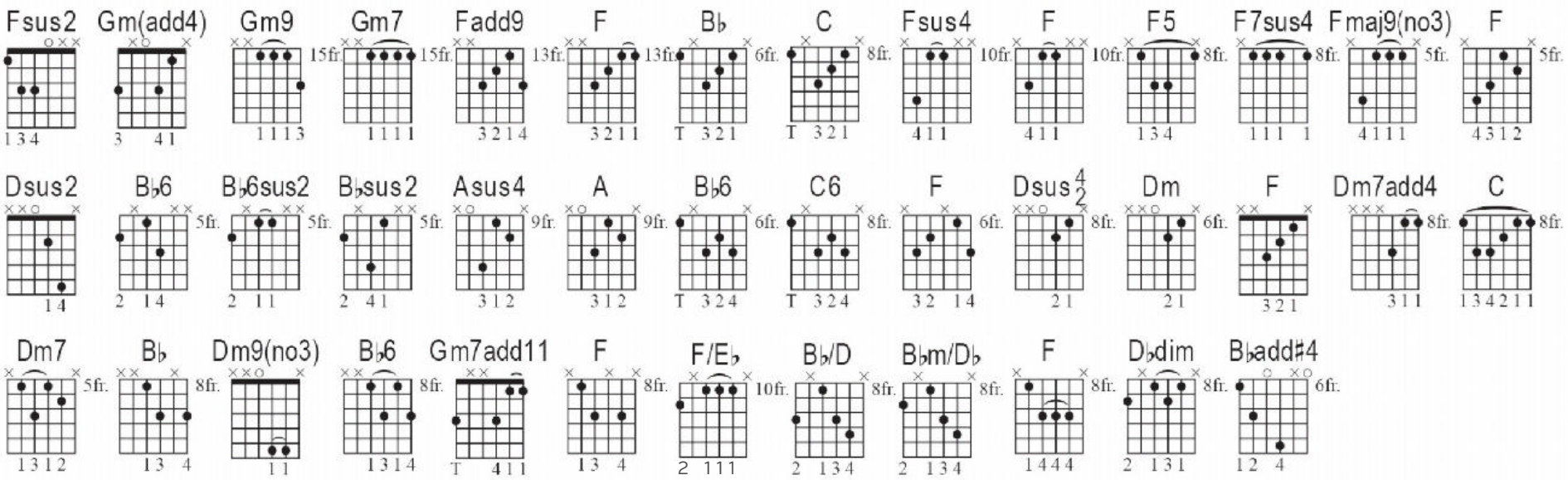
LORNE THOMSON/REDFERNS

"DON'T DREAM IT'S OVER"

Mateus Asato

As heard on **YOUTUBE**

Words and Music by **NEIL FINN** • *Transcribed by* **JEFF PERRIN**



A **Intro** (0:00)

Freely

Fsus2 N.C.(F)

Gtr. (clean elec. w/light delay effect)

(pick w/fingers) vibrato w/bar

let ring

1/2

Gm(add4) Gm9 Gm7

vibrato w/bar

let ring

let ring

(pull up on bar)

+1/2

Fadd9 F B♭ C Fsus4 F

+1/2

let ring

+1/2

vibrato w/bar (string noise)

*Roll into barré w/ring finger.

"DON'T DREAM IT'S OVER"
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B (0:24)

Moderately Slow ♩ = 75

F5 F7sus4 F5

10

C (0:38)

F7sus4 Fsus2 F Fmaj9(no3) Dsus2

*T.H. vibrato w/bar

vibrato w/bar

let ring

13

*Tapped harmonics: Hold fret-hand barré at 8th fret while tapping on 20th-fret notes w/bottom of pick-hand index or ring finger.

B♭6 B♭6sus2 B♭sus2 N.C. (A5) Fsus2 F Fmaj9(no3)

16

Dsus2 B♭6 B♭6sus2 B♭sus2 Asus4 A

vib. w/bar

let ring

19

D (1:03)

(♩ = 78)

B♭6 C6 F Dsus4/2 Dm

let ring

22

B♭6 C6 F Dsus4/2 Dm

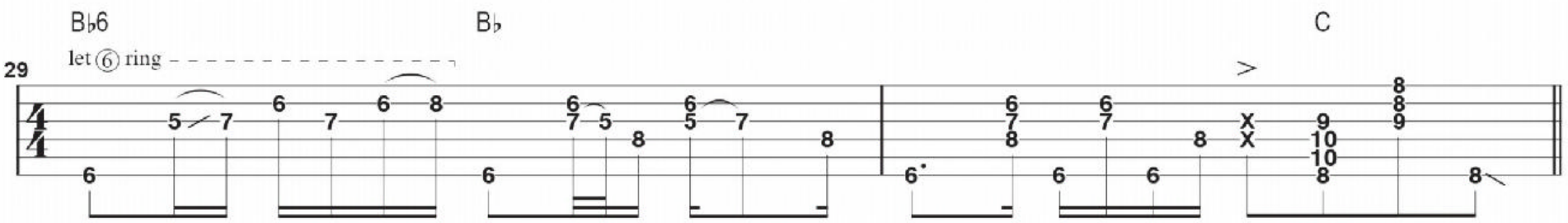
let ring

24

B♭6 C6 F N.C. (Fsus2) (Dm) Dm7add4

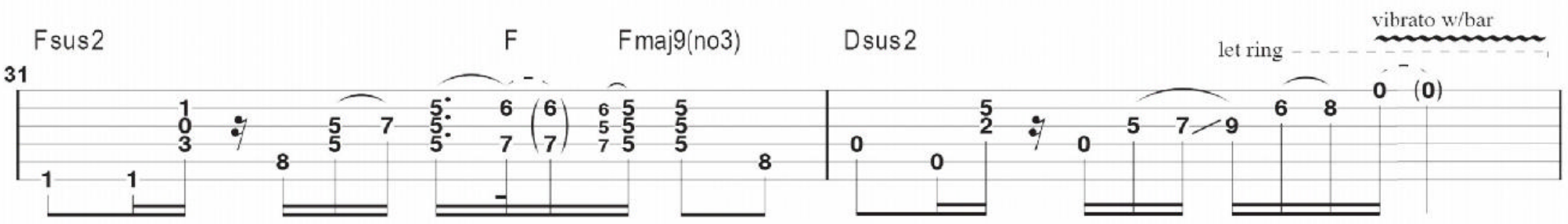
let ring let ring

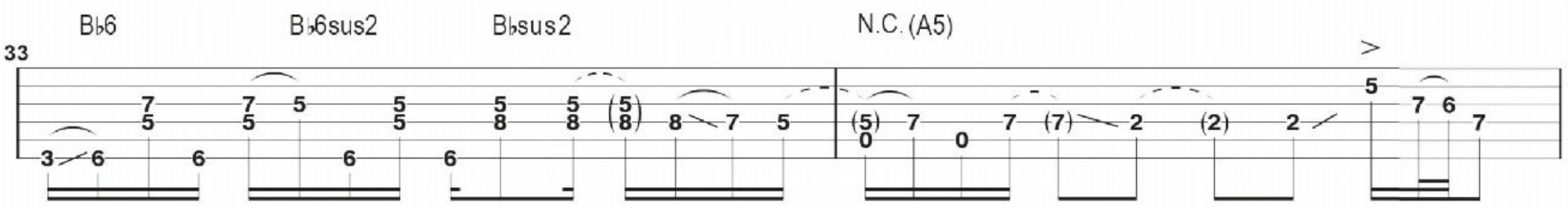
26

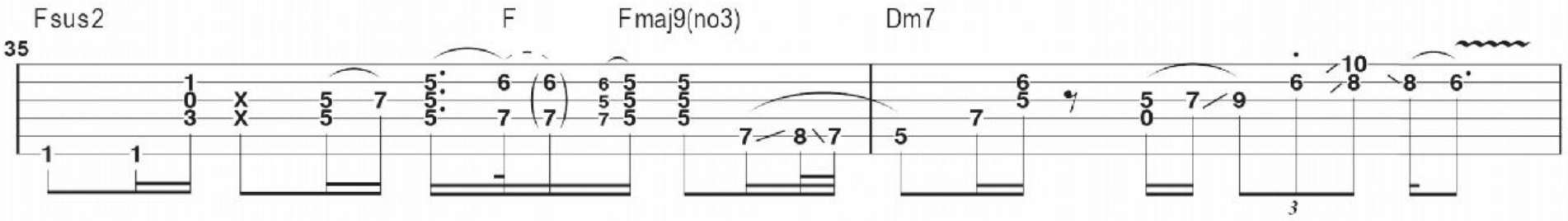


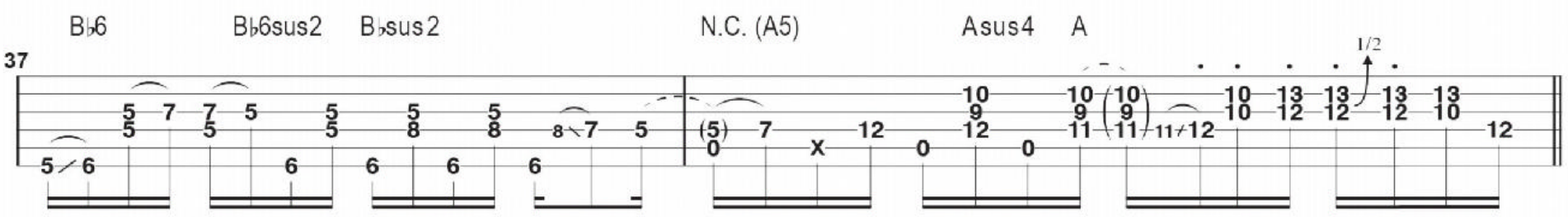
E (1:29)

(♩. = 75)



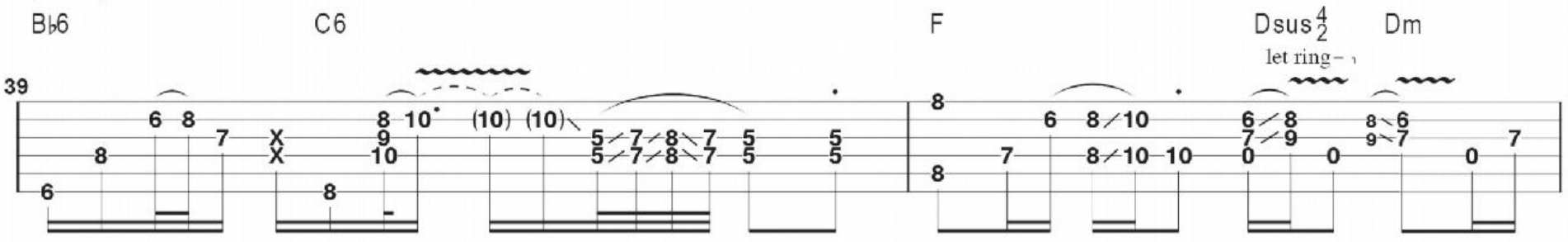


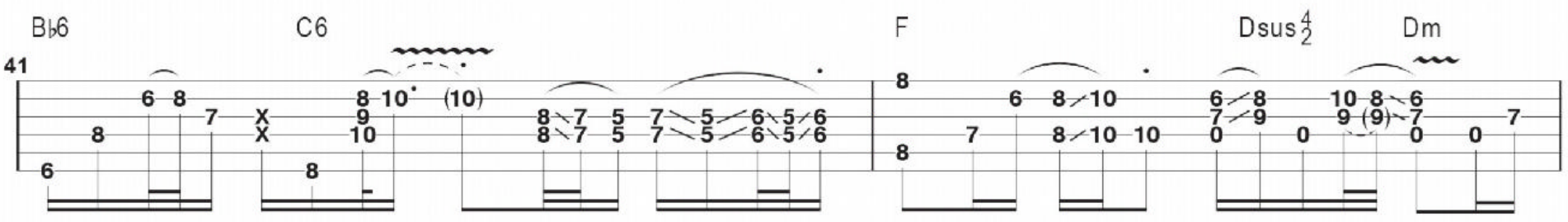


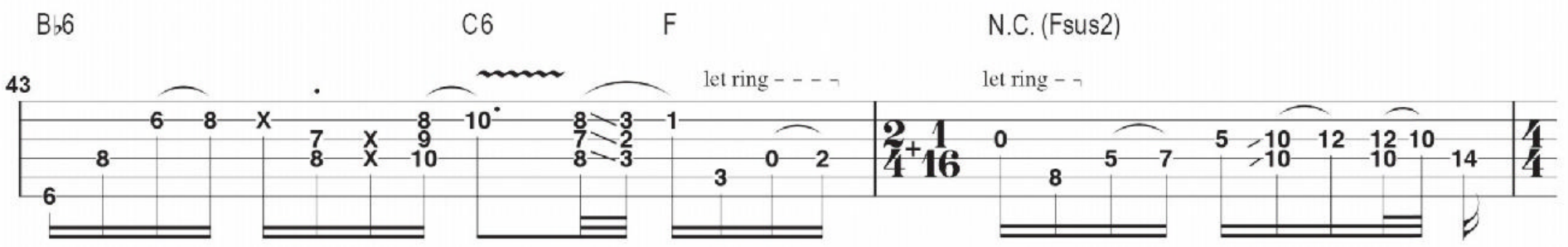


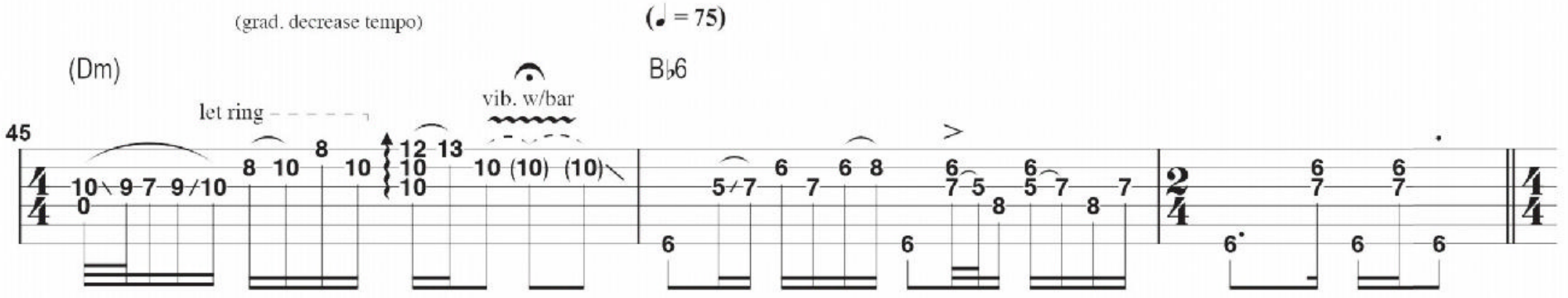
F (1:54)

(♩. = 78)

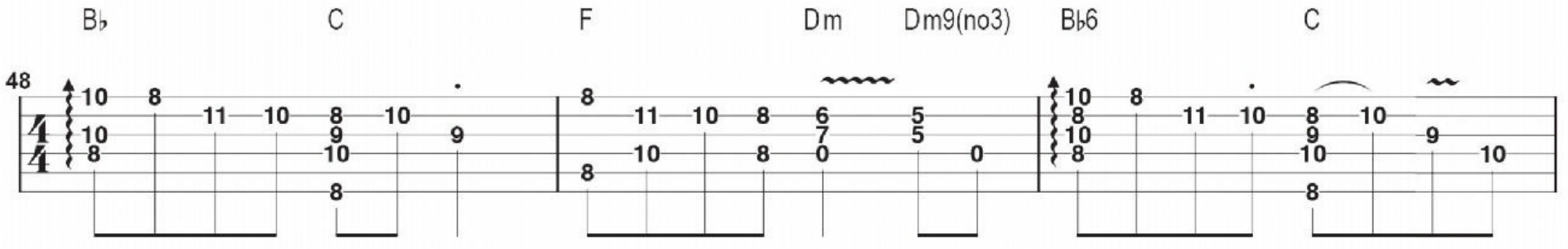




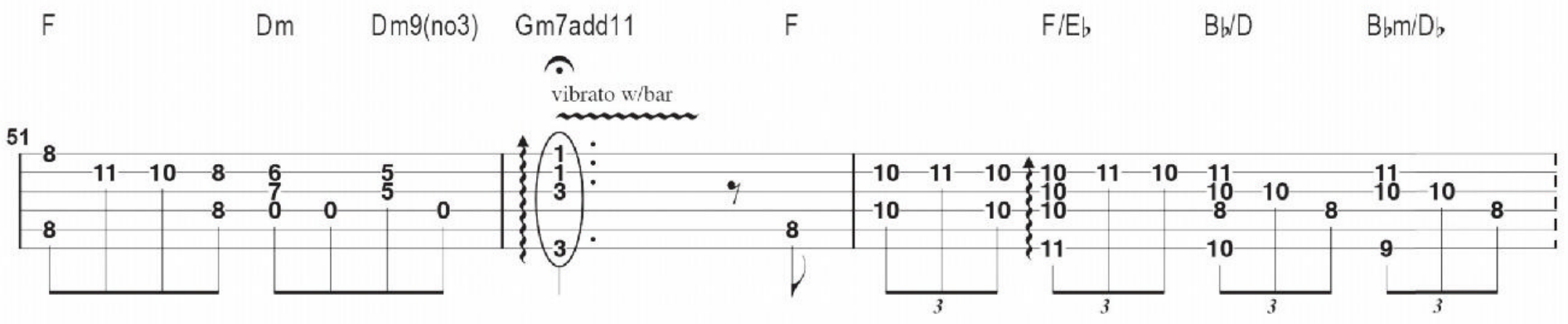

B♭6
C6
F
N.C. (Fsus2)
43
let ring
let ring

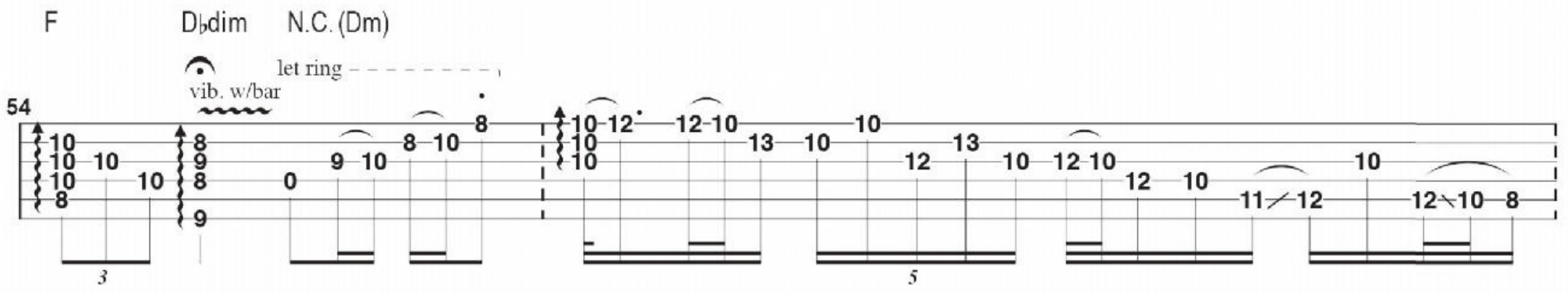

(grad. decrease tempo)
(♩ = 75)
(Dm)
B♭6
45
let ring
vib. w/bar

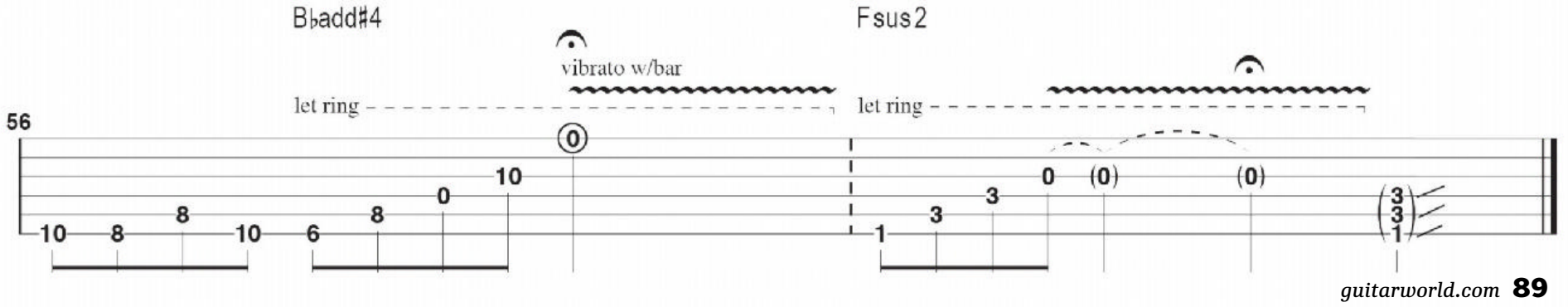
G (2:21)


B♭
C
F
Dm
Dm9(no3)
B♭6
C
48

Freely


F
Dm
Dm9(no3)
Gm7add11
F
F/E♭
B♭/D
B♭m/D♭
51
vibrato w/bar


F
D♭dim
N.C. (Dm)
54
vib. w/bar
let ring

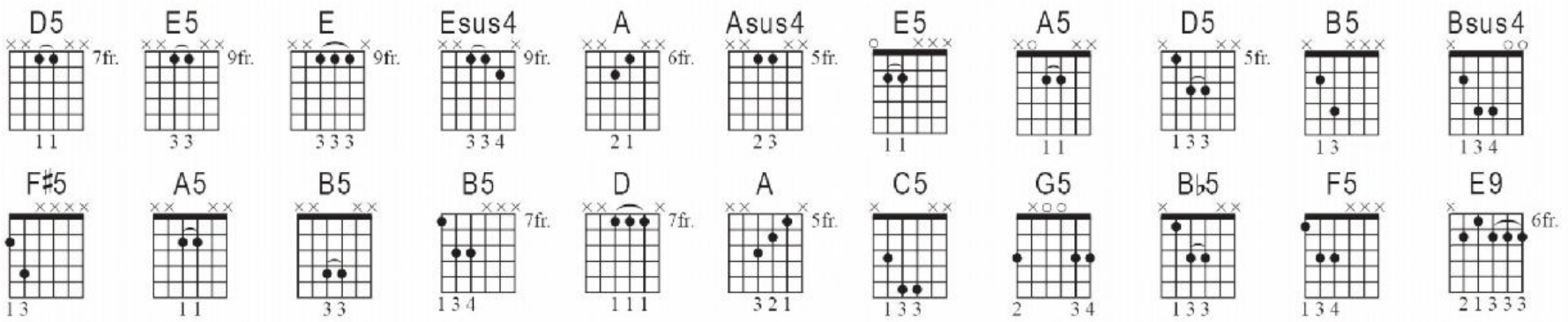

B♭add♯4
Fsus2
56
vibrato w/bar
let ring
let ring

"INSIDE OUT"

XYZ

As heard on **XYZ**

Words and Music by **MARC DOUGLAS, PAT FONTAINE** *and* **THIERRY ILOUS** • *Transcribed by* **JEFF PERRIN**



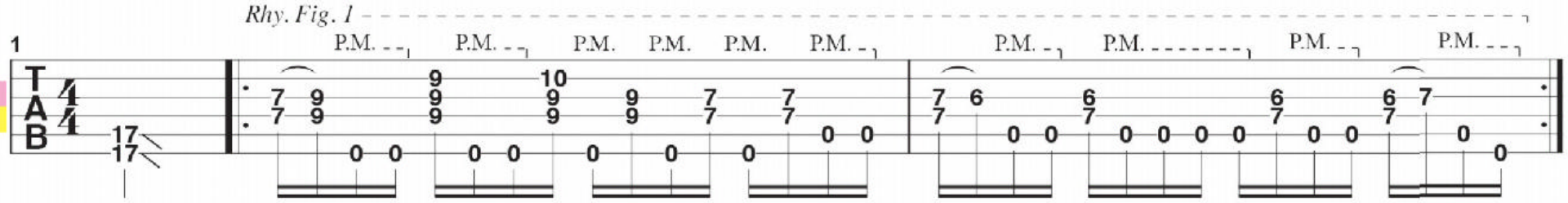
A **Intro** (0:00)

Moderately ♩ = 88

D5 E5 E Esus4 E5 D5 Asus4 A Asus4

Gtrs. 1 and 2 (elec. w/dist.)

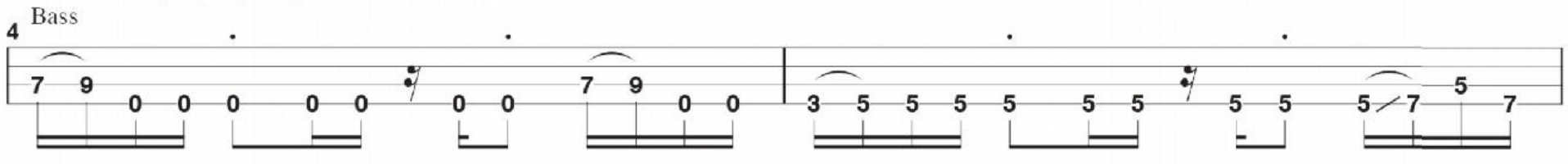
Rhy. Fig. 1



D5 E5 E Esus4 E5 D5 Asus4 A Asus4

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 1)

Bass

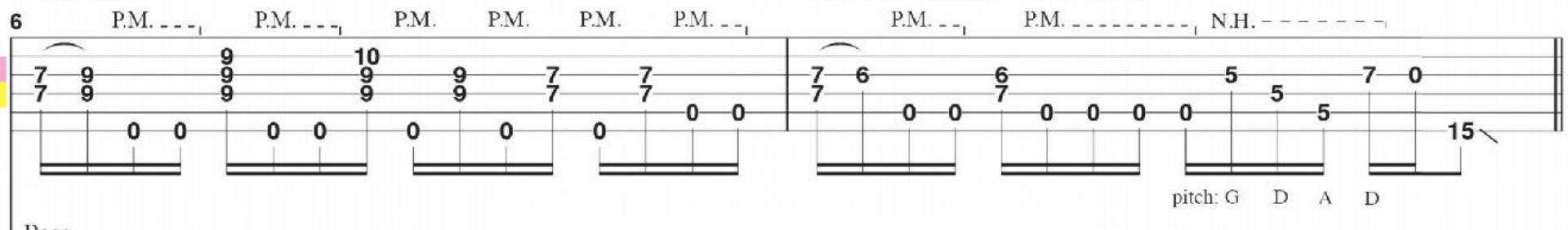


1. I feel

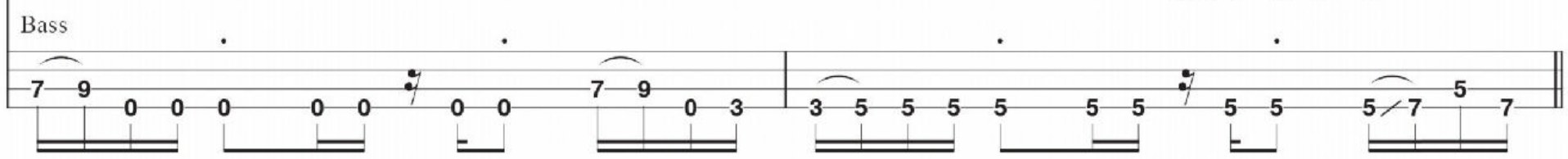
D5 E Esus4 E5 D5 Asus4 A Asus4

Gtrs. 1 and 2

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fill 1 (see below)



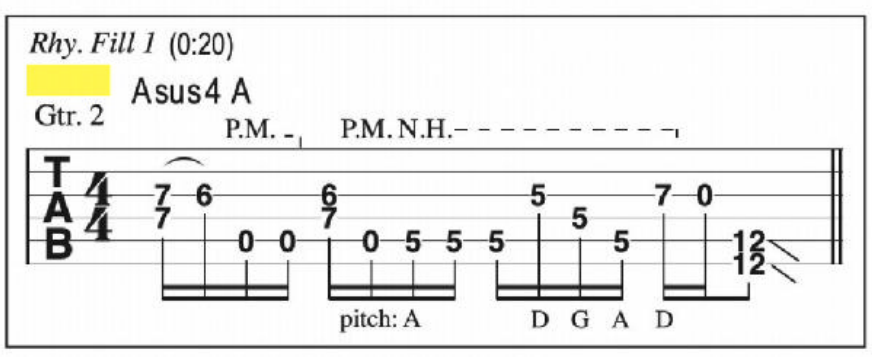
Bass



Rhy. Fill 1 (0:20)

Asus4 A

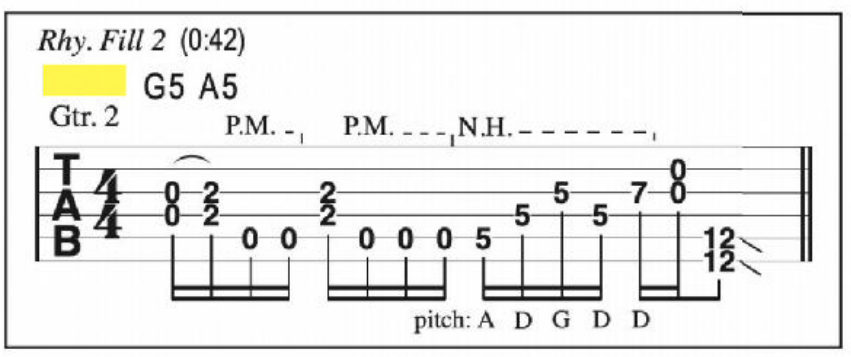
Gtr. 2



Rhy. Fill 2 (0:42)

G5 A5

Gtr. 2



"INSIDE OUT"
WORDS AND MUSIC BY MARC DOUGLAS, PAT FONTAINE AND THIERRY ILOUS.
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B **1st Verse** (0:23)

love between the two of

D5 E5 G5 A5 B♭5 A5

8

P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

Bass Fig. 1

us So take it off

D5 E5 G5 A5

10

P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. let ring 1/2

Ooh baby get your point across

D5 E5 G5 A5

12

P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.H.

pitch: E

Ooh yeah

D5 A5 G5 A5

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fill 2 (see below bar 7)

14

P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. N.H.

pitch: A G D A D

end Bass Fig. 1

C **1st Pre-chorus** (0:44, 1:39)

Fire up and let me know

D5 A5 E5

16

Bass Fig. 2

Come on honey let it go

D5 A5 B5

18

P.M.

end Bass Fig. 2

D **Chorus** (0:55, 1:50)

Inside out

D5 E5 E Esus4 E5 D5 Asus4 A Asus4

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 1)

20 Bass

Whoa Do it again

D5 A5 E5

22 Gtrs. 1 and 2

Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist.) (top note)

Gtrs. 1 and 2 (bottom note)

Bass

Bass Fig. 3

2nd time, skip ahead to G (bar 38)

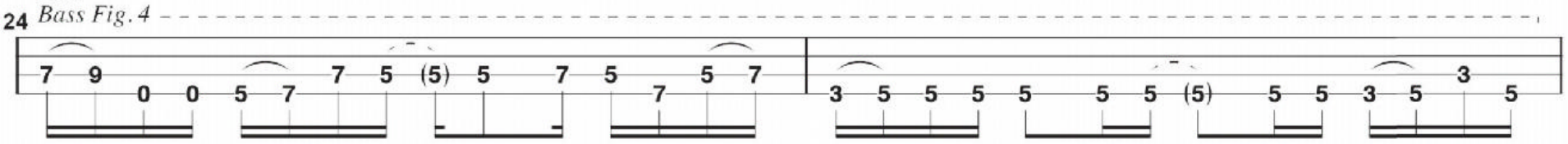
Inside **out**

D5 E5 E Esus4 E5 D5 Asus4 A Asus4

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 1)

Bass

24 *Bass Fig. 4*

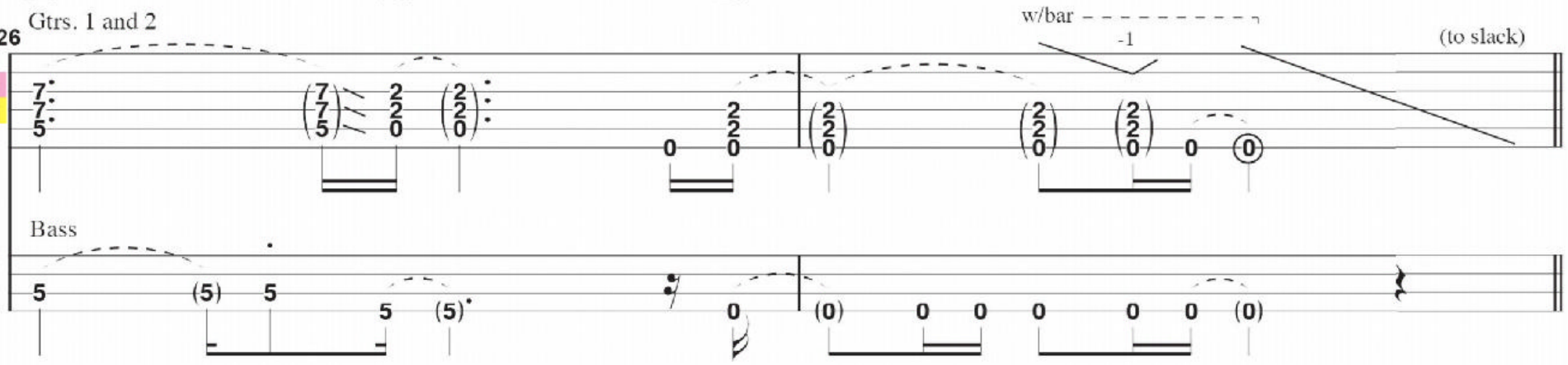


Whoa **Do it again** **2. Should I**

D5 A5 E5

Gtrs. 1 and 2

26 w/bar -1 (to slack)



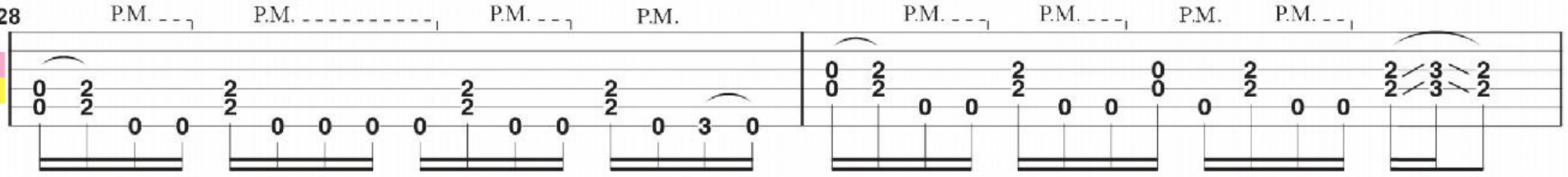
E **2nd Verse** (1:17)

guess **Ah yeah** **What else you got in mind**

D5 E5 G5 A5 G5 A5 B♭5 A5

Gtrs. 1 and 2

28 P.M.

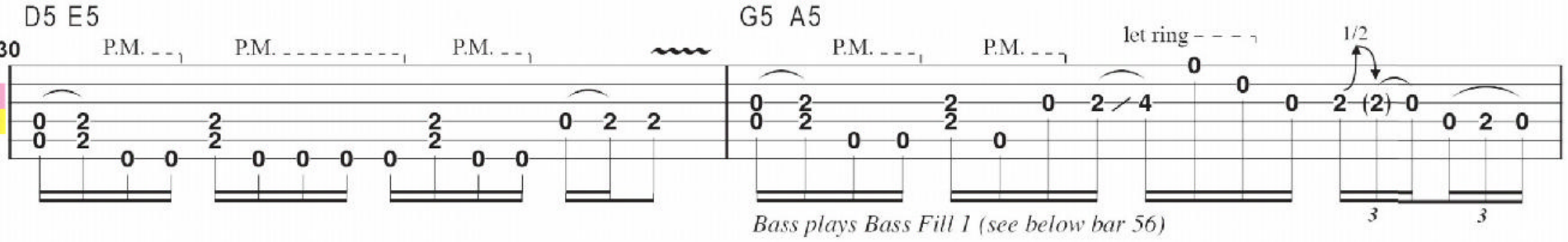


Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 w/ad lib variation (see bar 8)

When no means yes

D5 E5 G5 A5

30 P.M. let ring 1/2

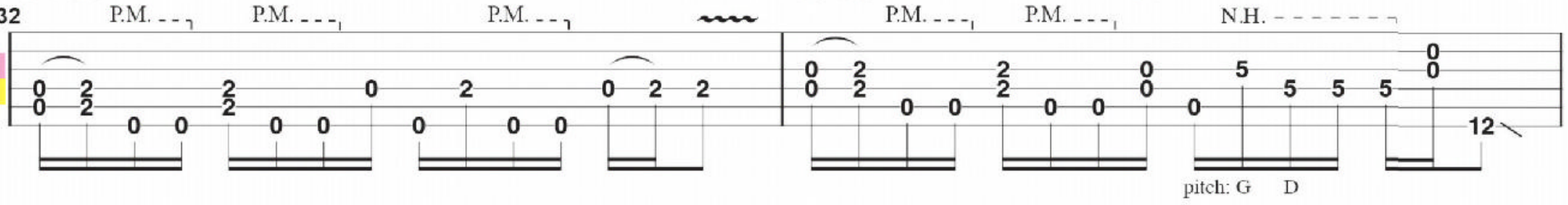


Bass plays Bass Fill 1 (see below bar 56)

Ooh **We've got to draw**

D5 E5 G5 A5 G5

32 P.M. N.H.

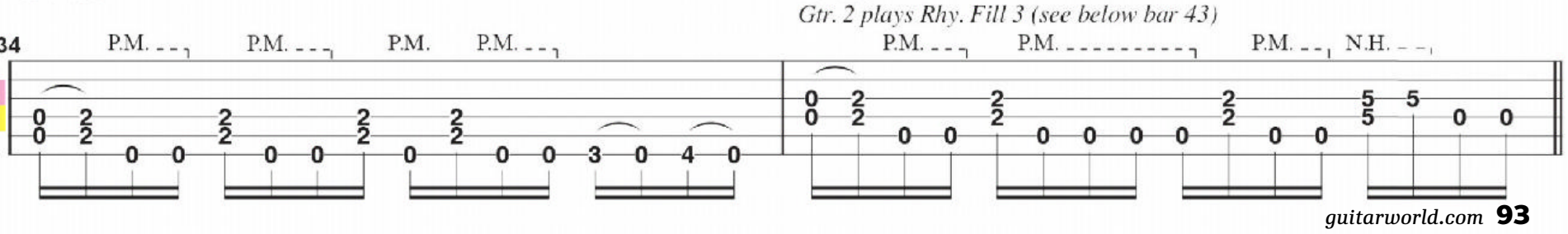


We've got to draw the line

D5 E5 G5 A5

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fill 3 (see below bar 43)

34 P.M. N.H.



F **2nd Pre-chorus** (1:39)

Fire up and let me know

D5 A5 E5

36

P.M.

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 simile (see bar 16)

Go back to D Chorus (bar 20)

Come on honey let it go

D5 A5 B5

38

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fill 4 (see below)

P.M.

G (2:06) **H** (2:09)

Whoa Mm (Inside) Come on honey now

D5 A5 Bsus4 B5 A5

40

Gtrs. 1 and 2

P.M.

let ring

Bass

(Inside) Oh

Bsus4 A5

43

P.M.

let ring

N.H. w/bar

*N.H. (pitch: A) played by Gtr. 1 only.
Gtr. 2 plays open third string w/o harmonic.

Rhy. Fill 3 (1:36)

G5 A5

Gtr. 2

P.M. P.M.

Rhy. Fill 4 (1:47)

B5

Gtr. 2

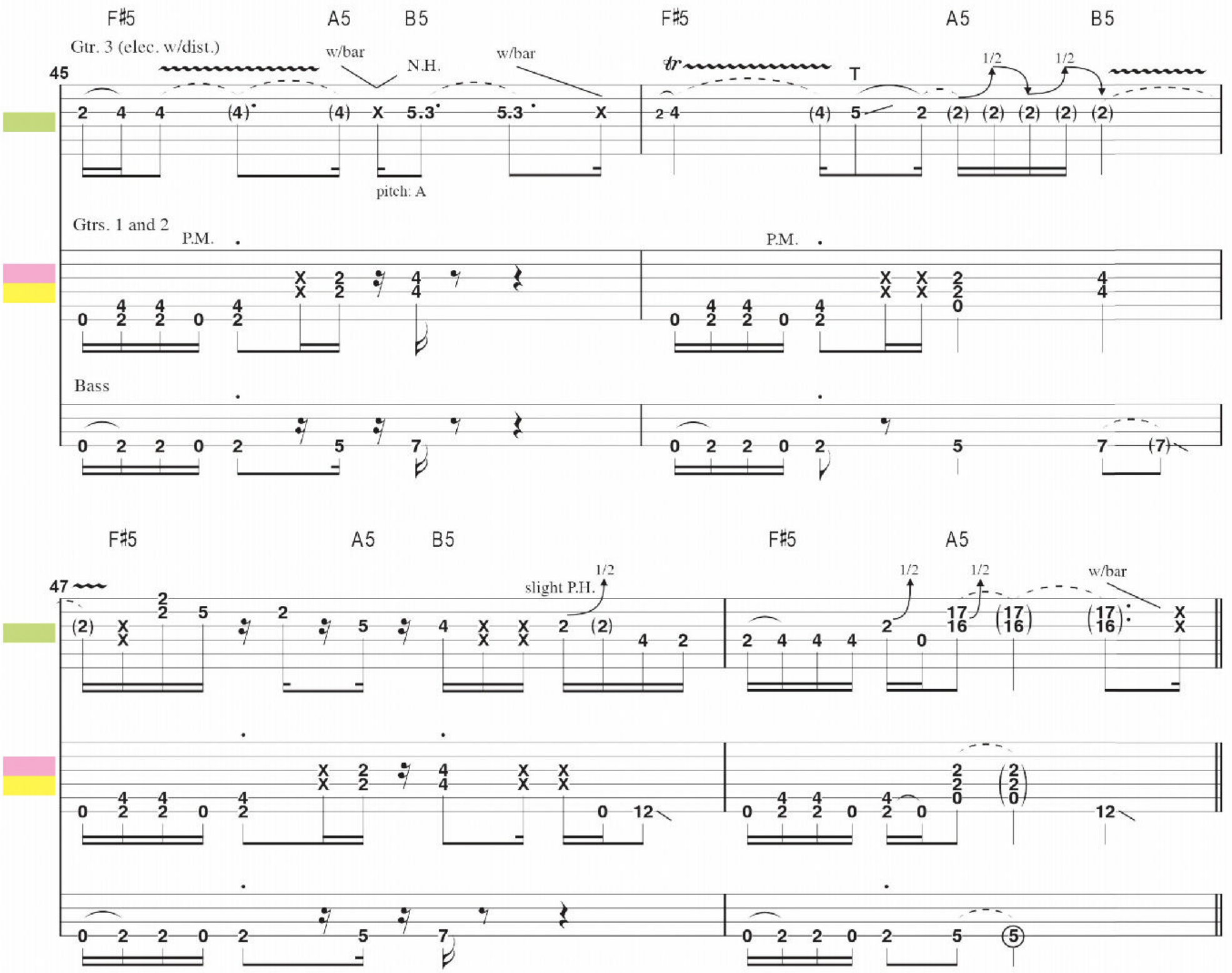
N.H.

*-5

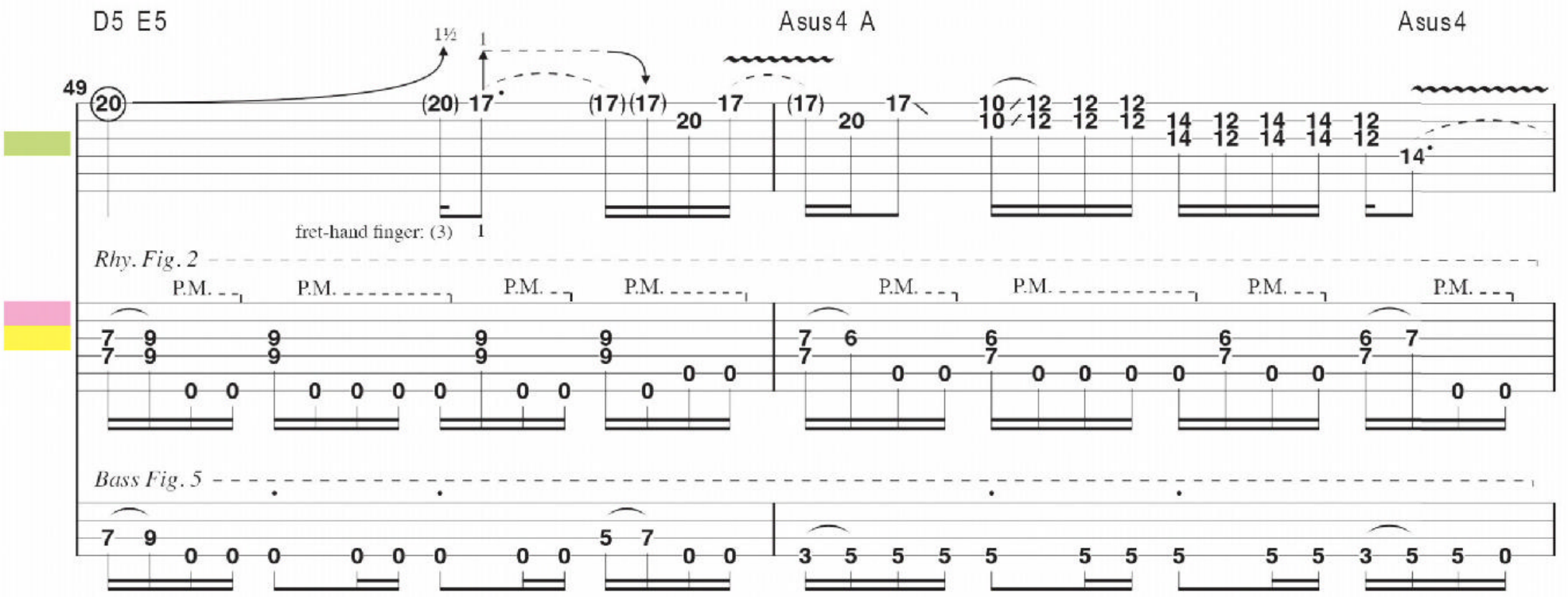
P.M.

*Depress bar prior to picking notes.

I **Guitar Solo** (2:20)



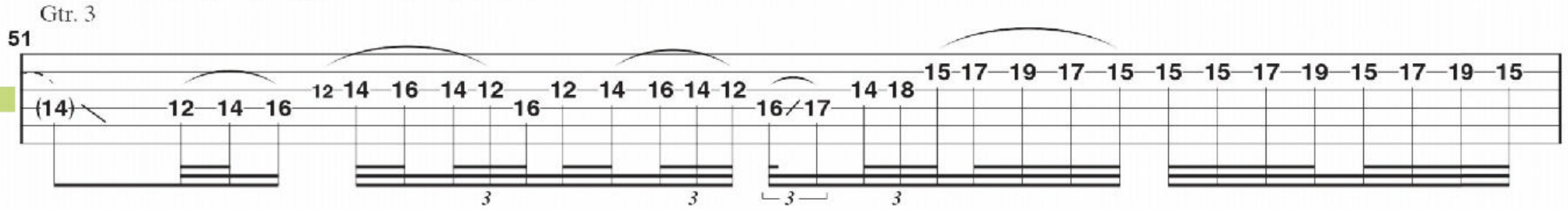
J (2:31)



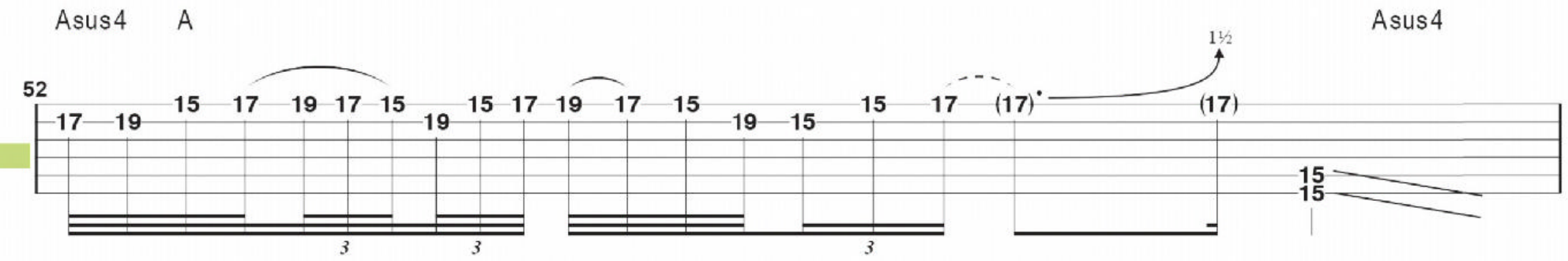
D5 E5

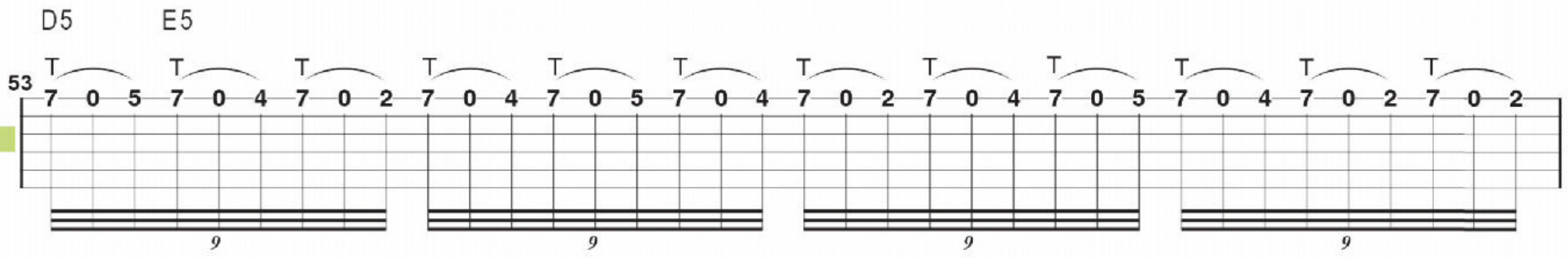
Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 2 three times, simile (see bar 49)

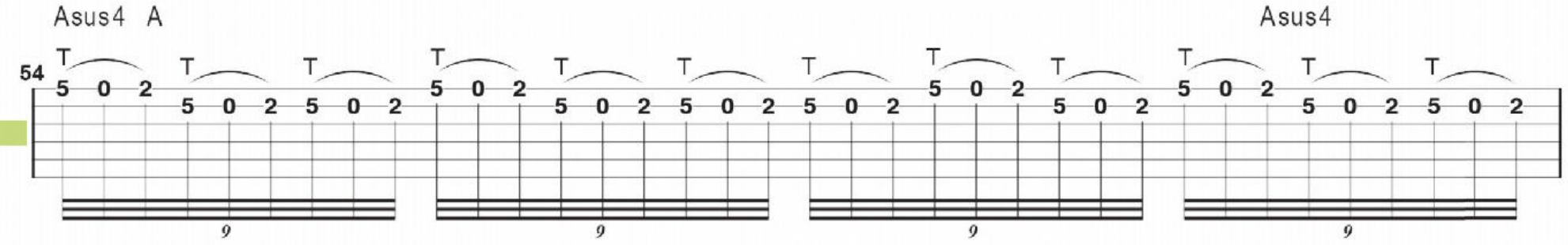
Gtr. 3

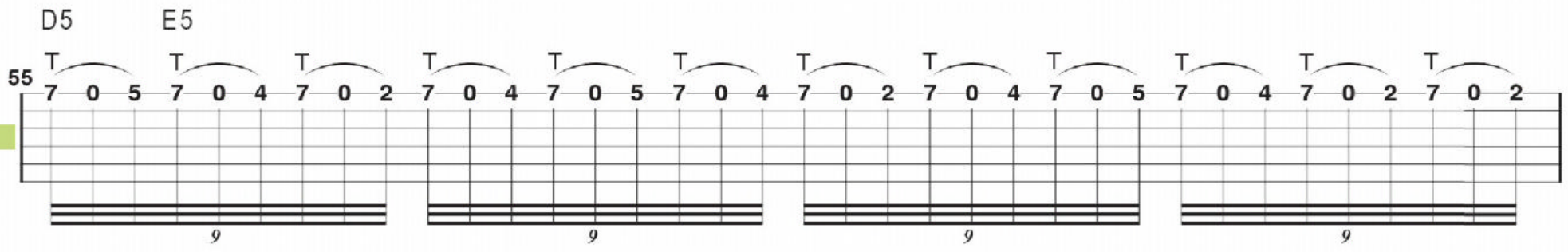


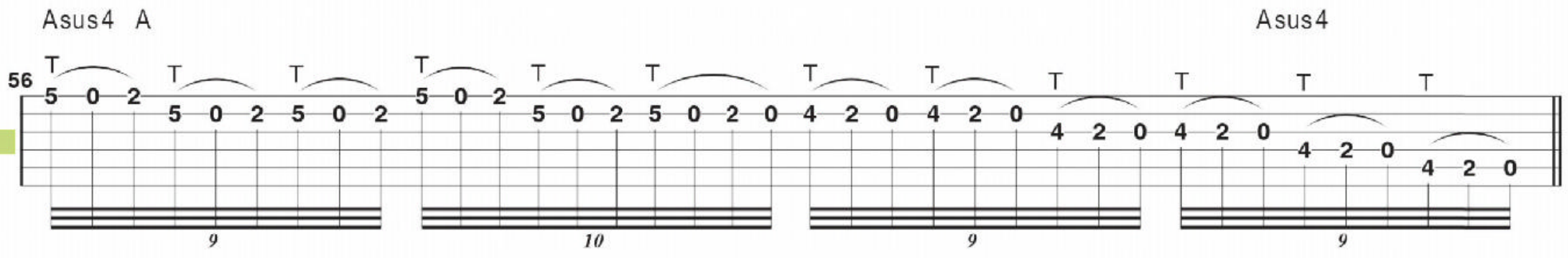
Bass plays Bass Fig. 5 three times, simile (see bar 49)





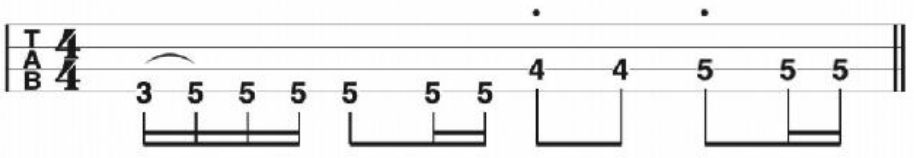






Bass Fill 1 (1:25)

G5 A5



K **Bridge** (2:52)

Come on Do it again Come on Do it again

*B5 (sus4-m7)

Gtr. 3 plays Fill 1 (see below)

Gtrs. 1 and 2

57

P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

**Chord symbol reflects overall harmony during this section.*

Bass

Come on Do it again

B5

59

Gtr. 3 (pick scrape)

Gtr. 2 plays Fill 2 (see below)

Gtrs. 1 and 2

L **Breakdown** (3:05)

Ooh yeah

D E Esus4 E D Asus4 A Asus4

Gtrs. 1 and 2

*T

62

**All notes sounded by slapping the strings with the bottom of an outstretched pick-hand finger at approximately the 20th fret. The finger is positioned roughly parallel to the fret in order to produce occasional random harmonics from node points located 12 frets above the fretted notes.*

I feel I feel love

D E Esus4 E D Asus4 A Asus4

Gtrs. 1 and 2

T

64

Bass

Fill 1 (2:52)

Gtr. 3

Fill 2 (3:03)

Gtr. 4 (overdub)

(pick scrape)

M **Outro Chorus** (3:16)

(1., 3.) Inside out

(2.) I feel love between the two of us

D5 E5 E Esus4 E5 D5 Asus4 A Asus4

Gtrs. 1 and 2

66

P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

Bass plays Bass Fig. 4 simile (see bar 24)

1., 2.

Whoa

Ooh

D5 A5 E5

Gtr. 3 (top note)

P.H. (pitch: E)

68

Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 simile (see bar 22)

Gtrs. 1 and 2 (bottom note)

3.

Whoa Do it again Yeah

D5 A5 N.C. (E5)

70

let ring

Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 simile (see bar 22)

Inside out

D5 E5 E Esus4 E5 D5 Asus4 A Asus4

72

P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

Bass plays Bass Fig. 4 simile (see bar 24)

(grad. decrease tempo) **Freely**

Whoa Inside inside out

D5 A5 C5 G5 B♭5 F5 E9

'dip' w/bar

74

Gtrs. 1 and 2

w/bar w/bar w/bar

Bass

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"HEAVEN BESIDE YOU"

Alice In Chains

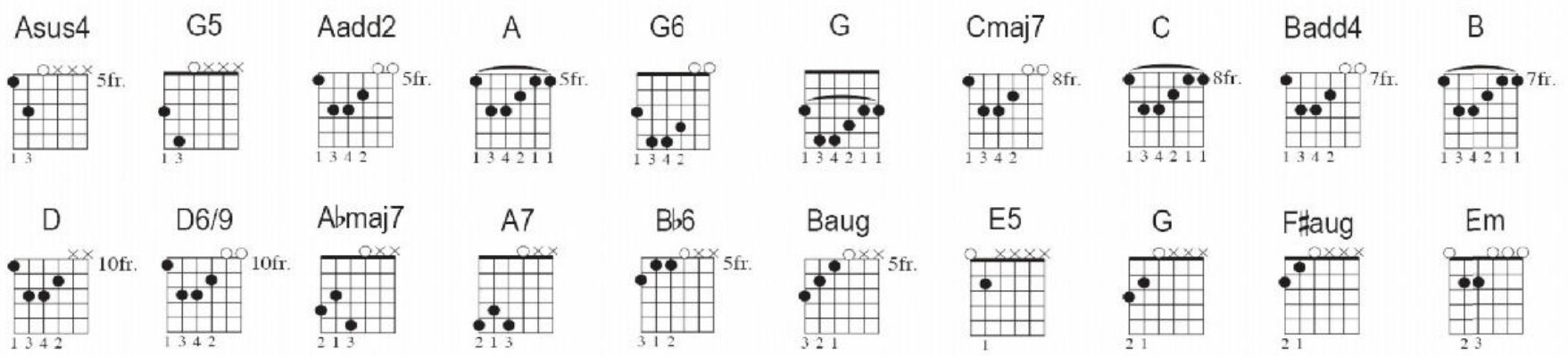
As heard on **ALICE IN CHAINS**

Words and Music by **BY JERRY CANTRELL, MICHAEL INEZ, SEAN KINNEY** *and* **LAYNE STALEY** • *Transcribed by* **DAVE WHITEHILL**

All guitars are tuned down a half step (low to high: E♭, A♭, D♭, G♭, B♭, E♭).

Bass tuning, low to high: E♭, A♭, D♭, G♭

All music sounds a half step lower than written.



A **Intro** (0:00)

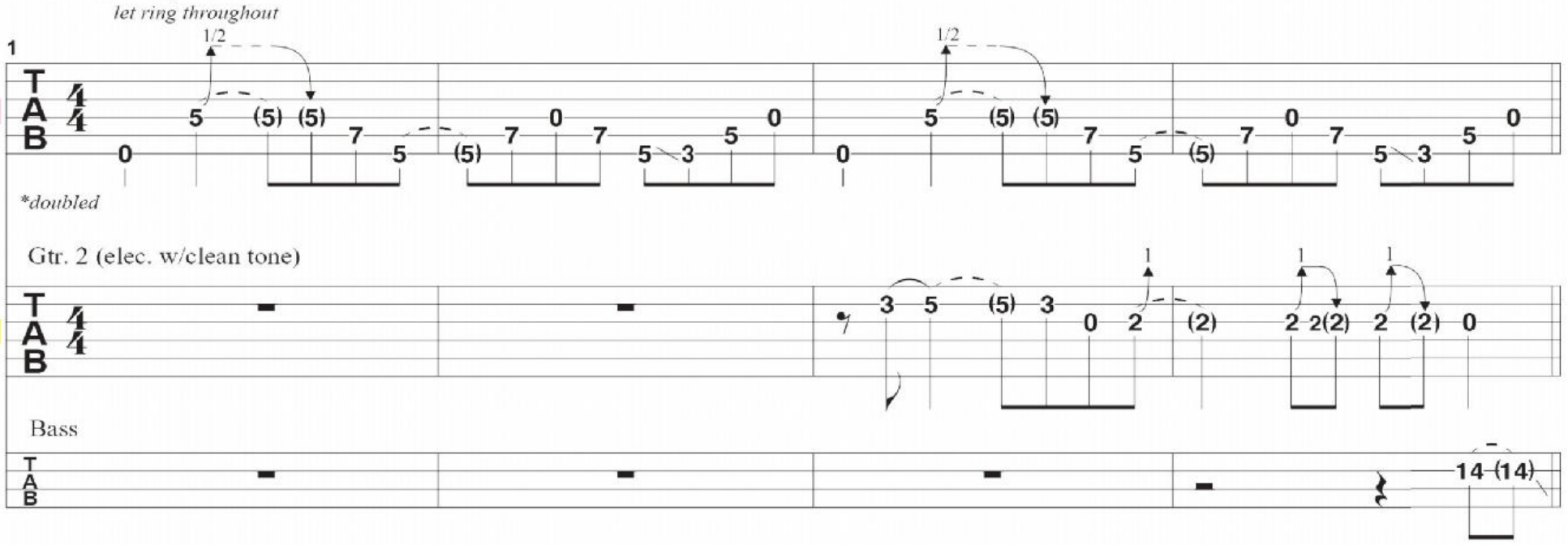
Moderate Rock ♩ = 108

N.C. (E) Asus4 G5 N.C. (E) Asus4 G5

Rhy. Fig. 1

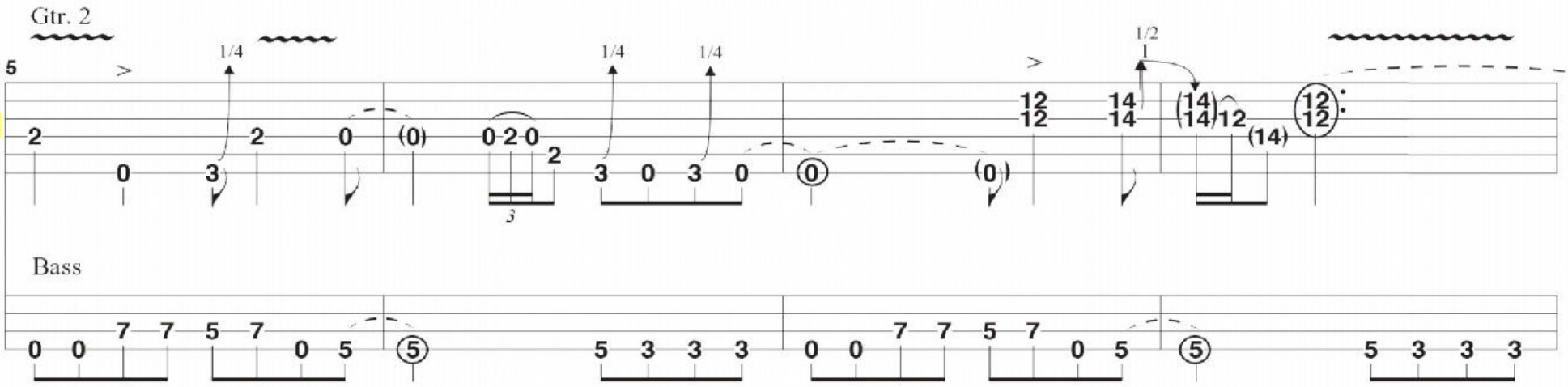
*Gtr. 1 (acous.)

let ring throughout



N.C. (E) Asus4 G5 N.C. (E) Asus4 G5

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 six times (see bar 1)



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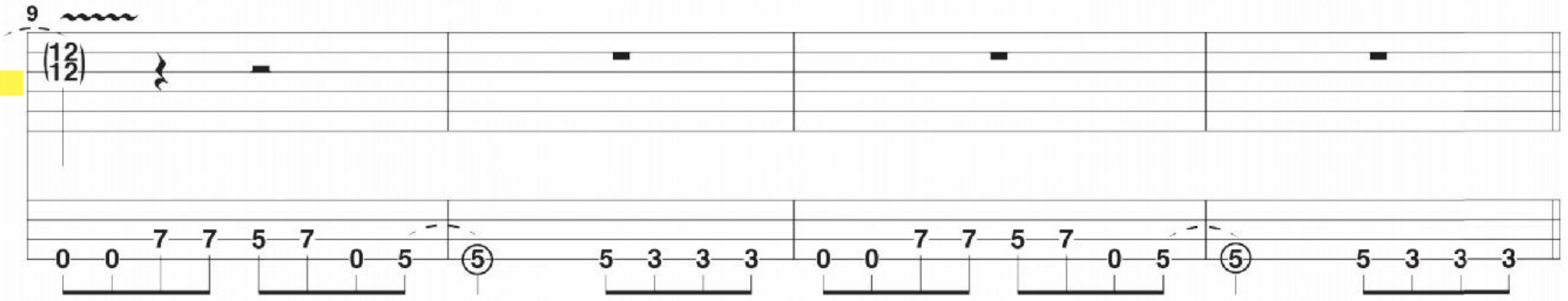
N.C. (E) Asus4 G5 N.C. (E) Asus4 G5

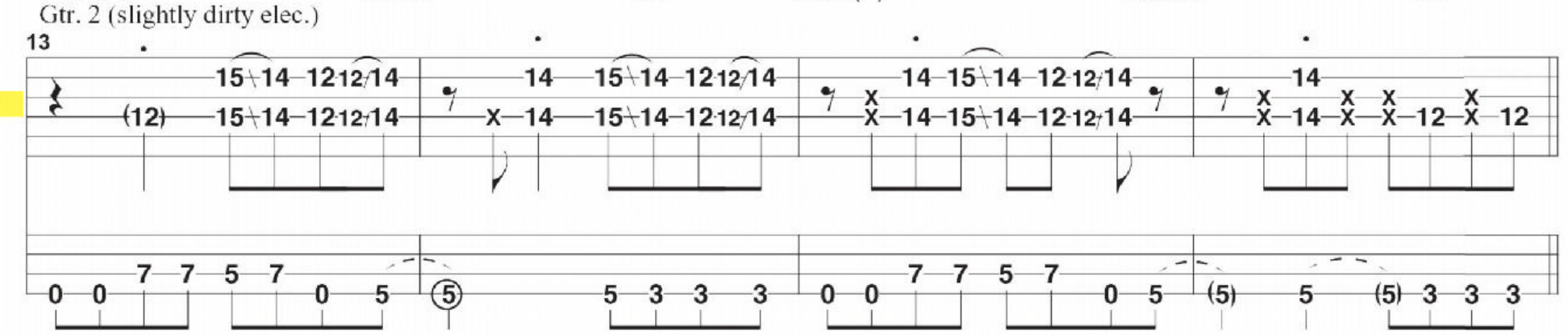


B (0:27, 2:11)

1.Be what you
2.Do what you

N.C. (E) Asus4 G5 N.C. (E) Asus4 G5

Gtr. 2 (slightly dirty elec.)



C 1st and 2nd Verses (0:36, 2:19)

wanna be
wanna do

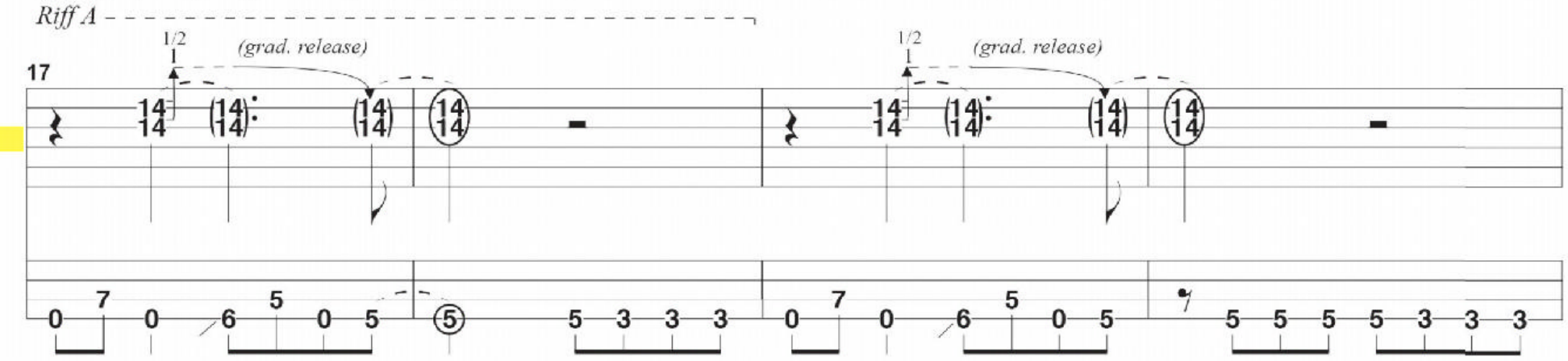
See what you came to see
Go out and seek your truth

Been what you
Do what you

N.C. (E) Asus4 G5 N.C. (E) Asus4 G5

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 twice (see bar 1)

Riff A



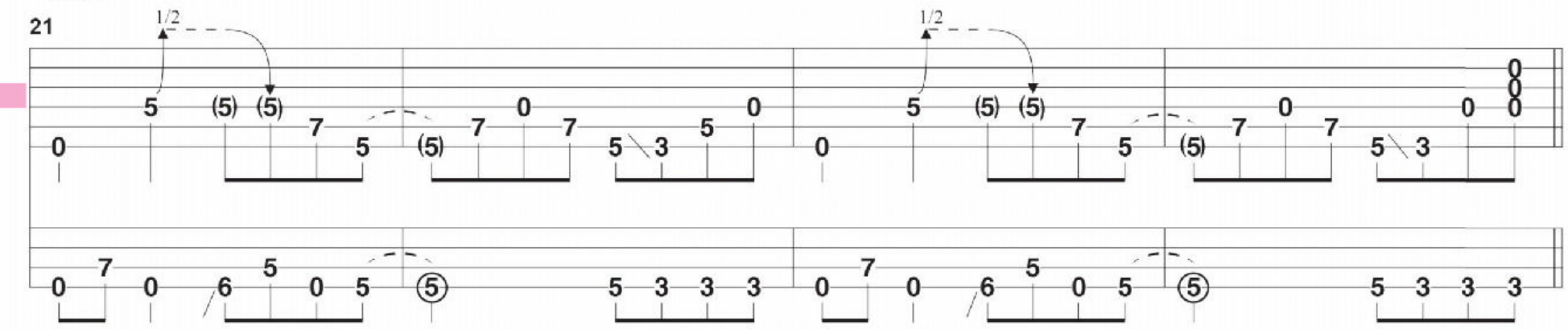
wanna be
down and blue

I don't like what I see
rather be me than you

N.C. (E) Asus4 G5 N.C. (E) Asus4

Gtr. 2 plays Riff A twice (see bar 17)

Gtr. 1



D 1st and 2nd Choruses (0:53, 2:37)

Like the coldest winter chill
Like the coldest winter chill
Like the coldest winter will
And you think you have it still
(2nd chorus) wish you had it still

1, 2, 3.
Heaven beside you (Hell within)
Heaven beside you (Hell within)
Heaven beside you (Hell within)
Heaven inside

Aadd2 G6 Cmaj7 Badd4

Gtr. 1
Rhy. Fig. 2

25

A G C B

Gtr. 2
Rhy. Fig. 2a

Bass
Bass Fig. 1

E 1st and 2nd Bridges (1:28, 3:11)

4.
you So there's problems in your life
I'm just see-through faded

Badd4 D6/9 A♭maj7 A7

end Rhy. Fig. 2 *Rhy. Fig. 3*

29

B D

end Rhy. Fig. 2a *let ring throughout* (w/dist.)

end Bass Fig. 1

2nd time on 2nd bridge, skip ahead to G *(bar 41)*

1. 2.

That's fucked up and I'm not blind
Super jaded and out of my

B♭6 Baug Baug

Gtr. 3 plays Fill 1 (see box below bar 65)

end Rhy. Fig. 3 *Rhy. Fill 1*

32

Rhy. Fill 1a

*hold chord through beat 1 of bar 30 on repeat

F **Interlude** (1:45)

mind *(1st time only)*

E5 G F♯aug

Gtr. 2

Rhy. Fig. 4 *end Rhy. Fig. 4*

w/sweeping filter effect *(play 4 times)*

35 1/2 P.M. P.M.

Gtrs. 3 and 4 (elec. w/heavy dist.) Gtr. 3 only (*Gtr. 4 continues holding the E5 chord*)

Rhy. Fig. 4a *end Rhy. Fig. 4a*

(play 4 times)

Bass *(play 4 times)*

Go back to **B** *(bar 13)*

Em Asus4 G5 N.C. (E) Asus4 G5

Gtrs. 2, 3 and 4

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 four times (see bar 1)

37

Bass

G (3:25) **H** **Guitar Solo** (3:28)

out of my mind

Baug E5 G F♯aug E5

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fills 1 and 1a (see bar 34)

Gtrs. 2, 3 and 4 play Rhy. Figs. 4 4 and 4a eight times (see bar 35)

Gtr. 5 (elec. w/heavy dist.)

fdbk. *wide vib.*

41

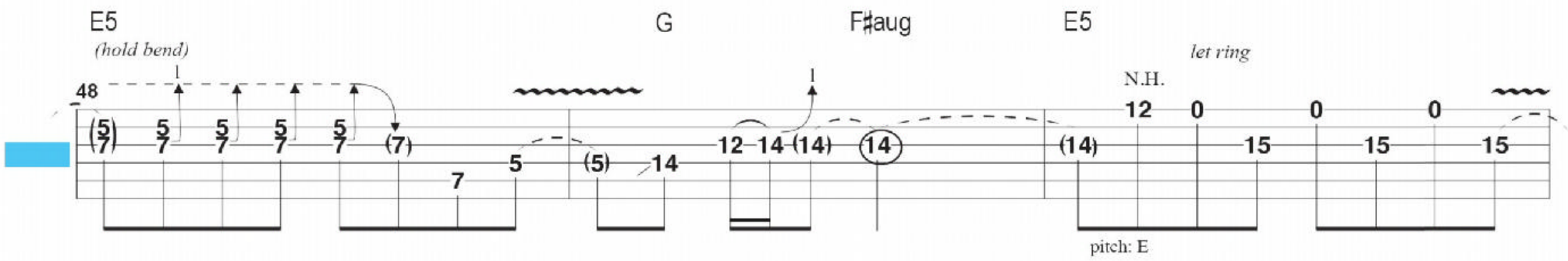
Bass Fig. 3

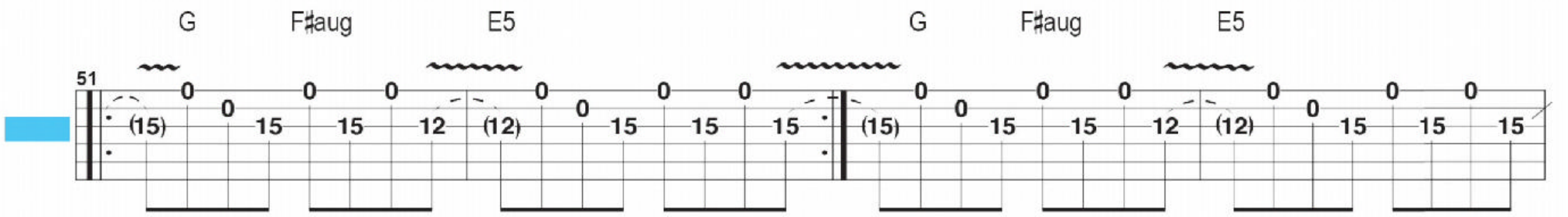
Bass repeats Bass Fig. 3 six times simile (see bar 42)

G F♯aug E5 G F♯aug

Gtr. 5 *grad. release*

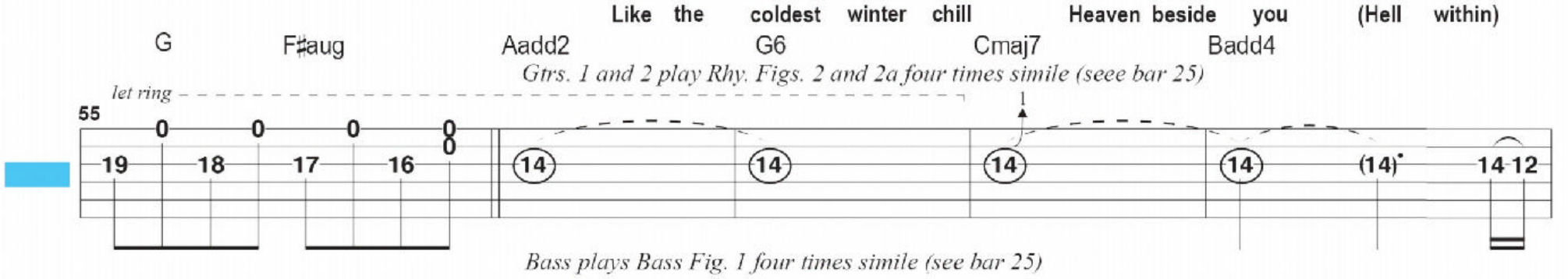
45





I **3rd Chorus** (4:01)

Like the coldest winter chill Heaven beside you (Hell within)

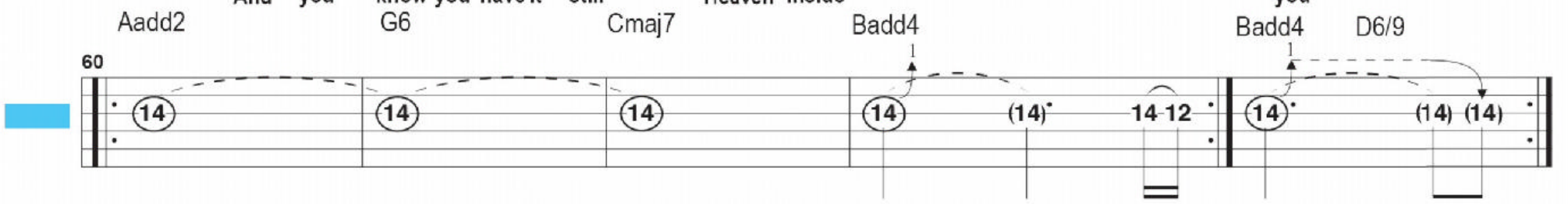


Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Figs. 2 and 2a four times simile (seee bar 25)

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 four times simile (see bar 25)

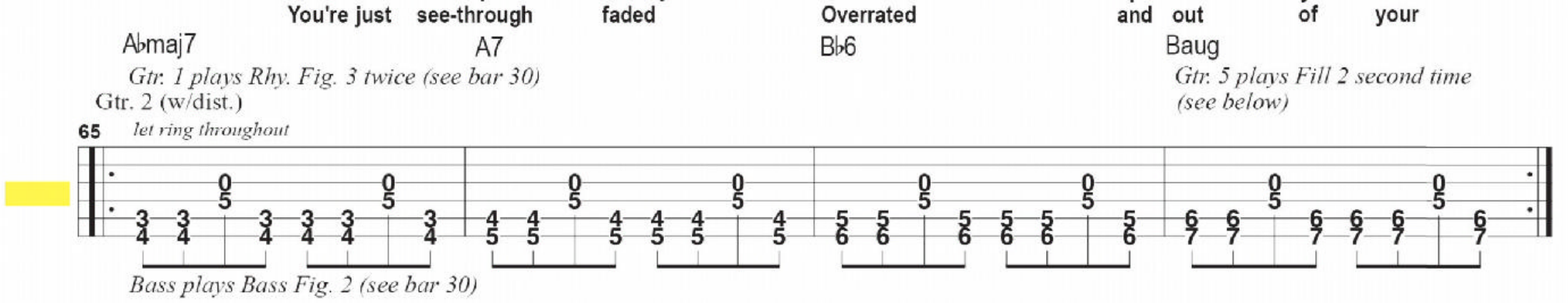
1, 2. 3.

Like the coldest winter chill Heaven beside you (Hell within)
Like the coldest winter will Heaven beside you (Hell within)
And you know you have it still Heaven inside you



J **3rd Bridge** (4:35)

So there's problems in your life That's fucked up but you're not blind
You're just see-through faded Overrated and out of your



Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 3 twice (see bar 30)

Gtr. 2 (w/dist.)

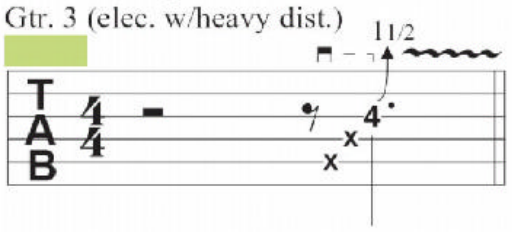
Gtr. 5 plays Fill 2 second time (see below)

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see bar 30)

Fill 1 (1:43)

(Baug)

Gtr. 3 (elec. w/heavy dist.)

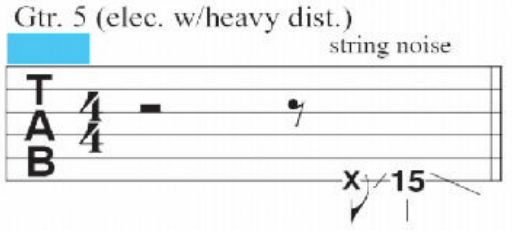


Fill 2 (4:50)

(Baug)

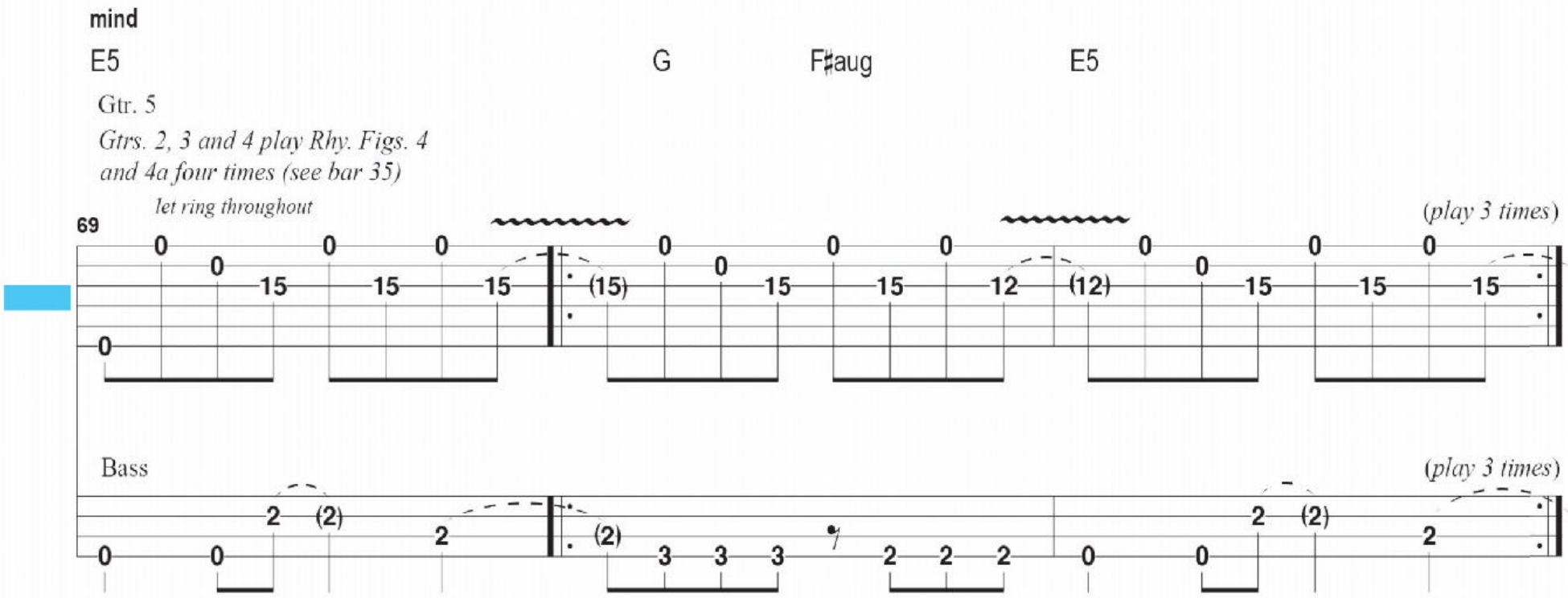
Gtr. 5 (elec. w/heavy dist.)

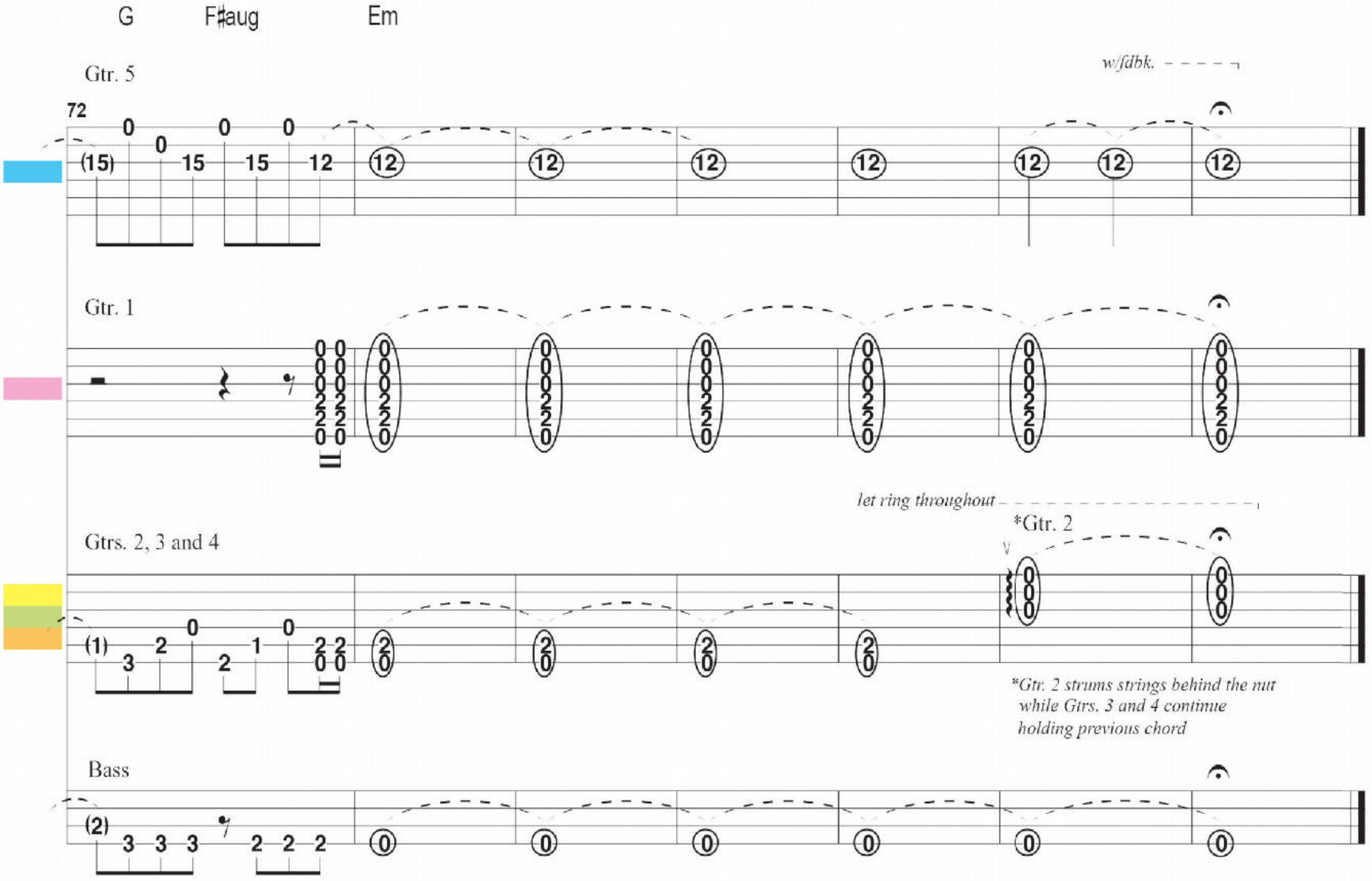
string noise



K Outro/2nd Interlude (4:52)

mind





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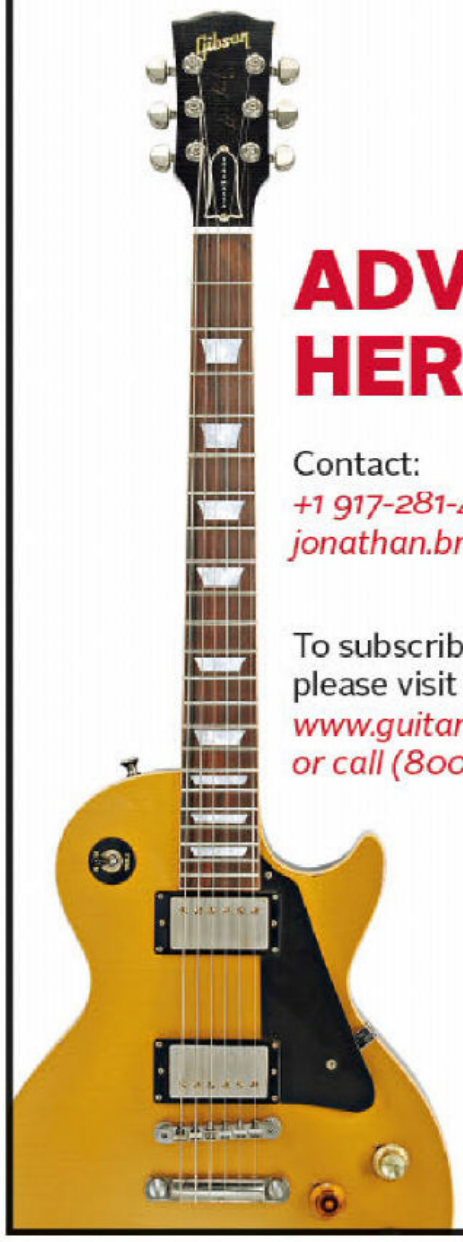

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"FREEWAY JAM"

JEFF BECK | *BLOW BY BLOW,* 1975 | GUITARIST: JEFF BECK | STORY BY CHRIS GILL

JEFF BECK IS one of the rare breed of players who always sounds like himself regardless of what gear he's using, whether it's the tiny Fender Pro Junior amps he plays onstage today, a DigiTech GSP-21 direct to the mixing console like he used on *Frankie's House* or the Marshall stacks he played onstage during the Seventies. Even when I once watched him play "Savoy" on an unplugged 1956 Gretsch Duo-Jet with heavy flatwound strings, it still sounded uncannily like what he recorded on *Guitar Shop*. Because his tone is so heavily shaped by his idiosyncratic technique, phrasing and personality, I've avoided covering Beck in this column, but as *Tonal Recall* makes it final bow, it seems like a good time to make an attempt at a track on his classic jazz-rock fusion breakthough, *Blow by Blow,* for the column's farewell.

The reason I say "attempt" is because exact details about what Beck used on that album are hard to come by. For example, during a 2006 interview for a Japanese magazine, Jeff said he didn't remember what amps he used on the album and speculated it may have been a Marshall, Fender or Vox — three very different-sounding amps. However, footage shot for a BBC program in August 1974 (only two months before the *Blow by Blow* sessions) provides a clearer picture of the rig Beck may have actually used. For his performance with the band Upp, Beck played his 1954 "Oxblood" Gibson Les Paul plugged into a ZB Custom volume pedal, Colorsound Overdriver and Cry Baby wah. The amps onstage were an early Seventies Fender Champ and an Ampeg VT-40. I believe the Champ was only used as a driver for his Kustom "The Bag" talk box, and the Ampeg was his main guitar amp.

Beck's tone on Upp's performance of a cover of the Beatles' "She's a Woman" is quite close to that on *Blow by Blow*. It also makes sense that Beck would use a more modest setup in the studio than the blazing loud Marshalls he used onstage, as it was a common practice during the Sixties and Seventies for guitarists to use entirely different, smaller rigs in the studio than what they used live.

For the featured track "Freeway Jam," Beck certainly used a Fender Stratocaster, as evinced by the whammy bar workouts. During this period, Beck was often seen playing two Strats — a natural finish example with an early Sixties body and Seventies rosewood neck with "bullet" truss rod adjustment nut and a stock Seventies Olympic White Strat also with a rosewood neck (not to be confused with the Sixties Olympic White Strat that John McLaughlin gave Beck while they were on tour together later). My best guess is that he used the natural Strat, but it could have been either. The overdrive tones come courtesy of the Colorsound Overdriver, which considerably thickens the Strat's midrange punch. The slightly fizzy decay of the power chords points to the Overdriver's use instead of the smoother sound of natural amp overdrive.

Jeff Beck coaxes magic out of a Fender Strat in 1975

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- Squier Classic Vibe '70s Stratocaster with Laurel fingerboard
- Seymour Duncan Antiquity II Surfer Strat bridge pickup
- Fender Pro Junior IV
- Vick Audio Overdriver

TONE TIP: *Although the Pro Junior isn't the equivalent of an Ampeg VT-40, if it's good enough for Beck, it's good enough for us. Turn up the volume to the brink of overdrive (about 6 or 7) and dial the Tone to 8.*

ORIGINAL GEAR

GUITAR: Fender Stratocaster with early Sixties body and mid Seventies rosewood neck (bridge pickup), Volume: 10, Tone 1: 10, Tone 2: 10

AMP: Early Seventies Ampeg VT-40 (Input One/Bright, Volume 1: 7, Volume 2: 0, Treble: 6, Midrange: 8, Bass: 2, Reverb: 0, Sensitivity 1: 0dB, Sensitivity 2: NA, Ultra Hi: Midrange switch: 2/1000Hz) with four Ampeg special-design 10-inch speakers (either CTS or Eminence)

EFFECTS: Colorsound Overdriver (Drive: 6, Treble: 4, Bass: 6)

STRINGS/TUNING: Unknown (probably Ernie Ball Super Slinky .009, .011, .016, .024, .032, .042)/standard

PICK: Unknown, probably Fender 351-shape (teardrop) medium

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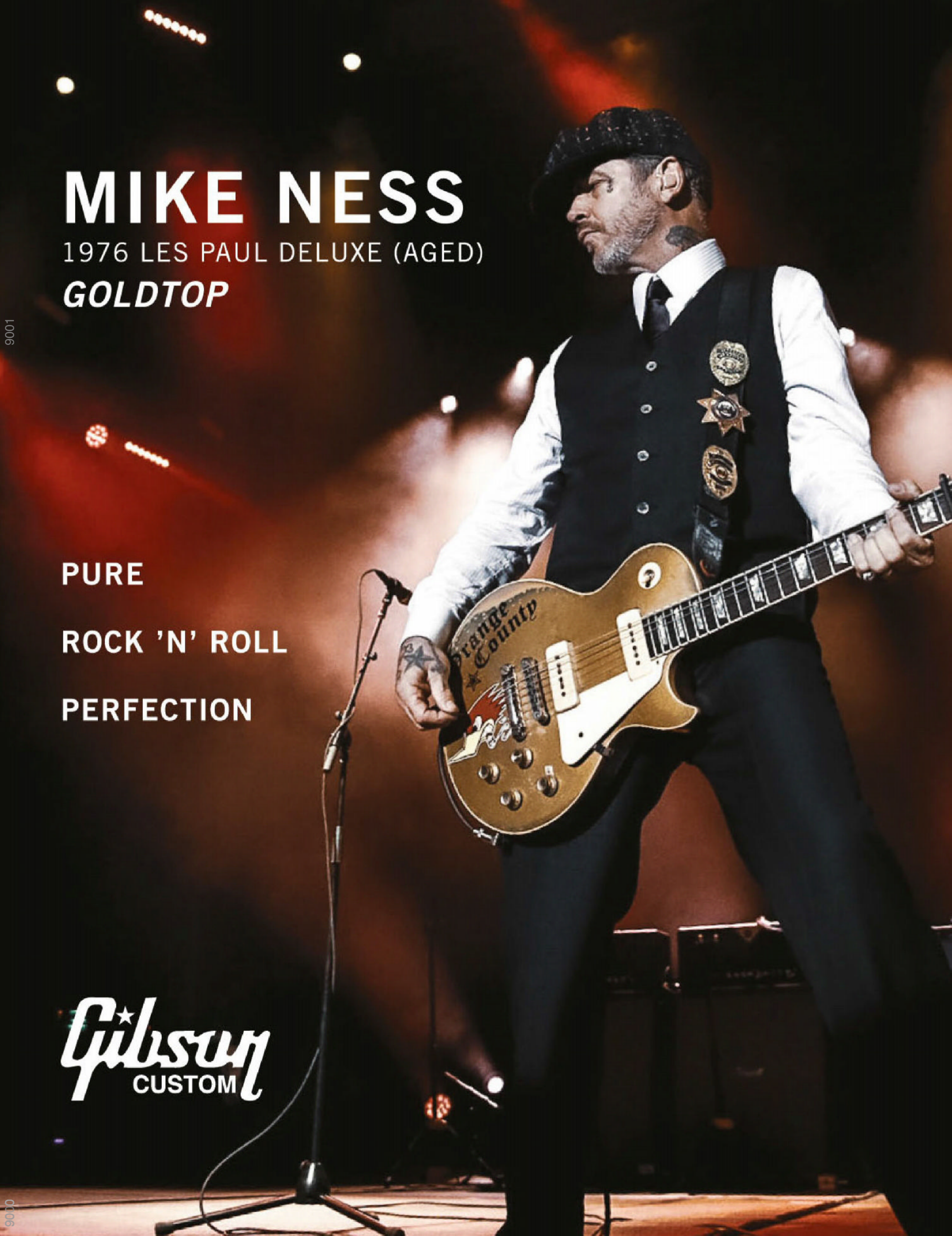
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